WATER BUT WINE

PRESENTER: SERAH NAMULISA KASEMBELI

A PROJECT PAPER PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN LITERATURE

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

2013
DECLARATION

This project is my original work and it has not been submitted for examination in another university:

Candidate: Serah Namulisa Kasembeli

Sign______________________ Date____________________

This project has been submitted with our approval as University supervisors:

First Supervisor: Dr. S.P. Otieno

Sign________________________ Date____________________

Second Supervisor: Prof DH Kiiru

Sign________________________ Date____________________
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother, Elizabeth Nditi who sacrificed all she had to ensure that I went to school and consistently wished me well in every stage of this project. To my father Isaac Kasembeli who was excited at my decision to pursue this project and consequently supported me. To my brother Nelson Mulama who though young in age, has always challenged me to think bigger and believed in my ability to influence the world. To my brother Joseck Simiyu and my sister Selina-Ndanu. You created a perfect environment for me to excel. I love you all.

To Aunt Josephine Mutinda, your prayers went a long way into literally creating this work.

Most important to the Lord God eternal, The mighty one of Israel, The Man of War, Yawheh, if you had not orchestrated this process, I would not have started it in the first place. Thank you for Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who encouraged me and showed me the direction when human help failed. I dedicate this work as a sweet smelling sacrifice to you. I love you Jesus.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge my supervisors, Dr. S.P. Otieno and Prof. DH Kiiru who patiently guided me through every bit of this project to make it academic and presentable. Thank you that you were available to supervise me. I benefited a lot from your academic prowess. Without your direction, I would have lost my way. God will abundantly bless you.

I am grateful to the lecturers of the University of Nairobi, Literature Department, whom I learnt a lot from their well of knowledge. I acknowledge Dr. Tom Odhiambo for encouraging me with the constant question, ‘Where is the play?’ which challenged me to keep working, Dr. Siundu, Dr. Muleka for encouraging me to write and Mwalimu Kimingichi who was ready to read the play I would write. Thank you all.

2010/2013 MA University of Nairobi Literature class; Ann Minayo, Boniface Aranda, David Mokunyo, Vincent Oduor, Benson Mwita, Duke Abuga, John Ongangi, Janet Dede, Gabriel Khaoya, Philip Amukoya. We walked this journey together, through discouraging and unbearable situations, but we also had happy moments where we laughed together. You made the whole process manageable and worth it.

I acknowledge Ann Minayo for being more than a friend from the start to the very end of our study. Thank you David Wafula for your encouragement, I can never underestimate it. Thank you Paul Warambo for accepting to challenge me. Your having gone ahead of me was God given.
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ABSTRACT

This project focused on the writing of a play based on the question of morality in a private secondary school. The play addresses the challenges that female students face in a morally decadent society that has none or few role models. It highlights the ironic acts of those who are supposed to be role models but end up being the source of moral corruption.

Chapter one introduces the importance of creative works and the genre of drama and its role in influencing society. It also encompasses the statement of the problem, objectives, hypotheses, justification, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, and scope and limitations.

This play is divided into five acts. Act one and Act four have Scene one and two while Acts two, three and five do not have scenes. My experience as a teacher, my encounter with other teachers as well as students in various schools inspired me to write this play. The general laws of writing drama guided my writing.

The essence of writing the play was to reawaken the stakeholders in the education sector on the need for the moral obligation that each has in bringing up girls.
INTRODUCTION

Creative writing provides a way through which writers depict the society in a work of art, which acts as a tool for speaking to the society. The central idea of creative writing is that creative writers essentially write out of the inspiration to talk about the society. I am interested in the genre of drama because of the liberty the playwright has to exploit characters through dialogue to communicate thematic concerns. This is based on the fact that the play centers on dialogue between characters to bring to fore the action and conflict.

Drama in itself is endowed with power to affect the society faster compared to other genres of literature because the ideas of the playwright are enacted on stage. Every play is written for the purpose of enacting it on stage. The performance causes a major impact in the society because it reawakens and enlightens people on particular happenings affecting them. The audience for an enacted play is wider at any given time compared to other genres such as the novel. A play recreates the imagined world making the audience see for themselves what is happening.

I was inspired by these basic principles to write a play that addresses a particular issue in the society. Creative writers for insistence have the liberty to raise various pertinent concerns in the society touching on any aspect of life that they wish to focus on. These can comprise of matters such as oppression, dictatorship, colonialism, politics, leadership, work, family, relationships, love just to mention but a few.

The nature of morality in secondary schools is an issue of concern in society in the twenty-first century and it will probably be for many years to come. Touching on this is the very basic fact that students in the current Kenyan secondary school system are in the fragile developmental stage of adolescence: a stage where they are eager to learn by experimenting on various things. Closely connected to this is the role of teachers, parents and role models and mentors in upbringing the teenagers. This for me is a handy material for a
playwright to develop a play from. The focus of my play was the question of the morality of teachers and students in a particular secondary school. This was out of my experience as a teacher that made me realize the reality that there is dire need for role models and mentors for young people. The portraiture of an imagined situation, which may greatly reflect what happens in such institutions, will help sensitize the nation on the need to set up effective policies to preserve the young generation.

**Statement of the Problem**
I chose to write a play, which dramatizes the plight of teenage girls in a private secondary school when left at the mercies of morally questionable teachers and custodians. This was of great value in advancing the moral obligation of literature.

**Objectives**
1. To write a play that addresses moral decadence in a private school
2. To examine how conflict in drama can be used to achieve themes
3. To contribute to the growth of drama as a literary genre

**Hypotheses**
1. Dramatization of moral decadence in a private school projects lessons for the society
2. Conflict is an essential aspect in the writing of any drama
3. Playwrights employ aesthetic effects in their craft

**Justification**
A number of plays have been written in response to the Kenyan political arena, cultural dilemmas and other social conflicts. There is however a scarcity of plays that address the teenage girl-child in the hands of a morally decadent society. I acknowledge that there are unpublished dramas concerning schools as well as television and radio shows but these have not been published as plays. Writing a play focusing on this theme will be of indispensable value since
drama reawakens people towards advocating for a better society. The parents, teachers and other stakeholders will be in position to understand the precariousness of the education set-up in the twenty-first century. Creative writing is an opportunity for a writer to tell his or her reader about the society. In addition to this, literature has a moral obligation.

**Literature Review**

In writing a play, David Bergman and Daniel Mark in *The Heath Guide to Literature* (1984), argue that the key elements of dramatic literature are characters, dialogue, plot, conflict, setting and language. They argue that in the text of a play, the setting is usually described in the opening stage directions. Its function is to establish the play in a specific time and place, and it may determine the play's level of reality. The setting may be realistic or non-realistic. A realistic setting requires extensive scenery and stage furniture, for the object is to create as real an environment as possible.

In the constructing of my play, I employed Bergman and Mark’s arguments by having the opening stage directions for my play. This informed my introducing the setting of the play in terms of the geographical location and the time. The setting was realistic since I defined the physical surrounding of the characters and the characters’ physical appearance. The surrounding comprised of the buildings, furniture and stationery whereas the description of the characters expressed their physique, dressing and their way of speaking.

According to David Bergman and Daniel Mark, a playwright, in writing the text of a play, employs dialogue and stage directions. Dialogue is the conversation of two or more characters. Dialogue was one of the central concepts in my writing. I employed this conversation between characters deliberately to help me expose the traits of the characters and ultimately bring to fore the subject matter of my writing.
Bergman and Mark state that the plot is a key element of any play. They define it as an ordered chain of physical, emotional, or intellectual events that ties the action together. It is a planned sequence of interrelated actions that begins in a state of imbalance, grows out of conflict, reaches a peak of complication, and resolves into some new situation. I deliberately created the plot of my play by establishing characters that through their orientation generated certain actions through their speech and behaviour. In my writing the play, I formulated these actions by using the characters and created them in such a way as to necessitate conflict. I made the conflict the centre of the play and build the play by depicting how the conflict would be resolved. In my case, the conflict was a moral one focusing on the different views of teachers and students in a teaching and learning environment.

Of importance in my literature review was the argument by J.L Styan in The Dramatic Experience (1971) where he asserts that a plot is roughly described as events pieced together to make up a story. The story then communicates a theme, which is the main purpose for which a play is written. Styan gives the following example, which I applied in my writing.

Suppose we wished to dramatize the injustice of the law in a well made play. We might hit upon the story of a forgery of a cheque. It would not long sustain the drama to illustrate how the forgery was managed: of more interest would be the causes and results of the crime, and on these, we should have to concentrate. Causes would involve some examination of the forger’s character, and results would call for comment on the application of the law. So we might arrive at some pattern such as this: an employee forges a cheque -why? - Say, to help a young woman- why? - So that she might leave her husband- why? - Because he is a bully. Next, his forgery must be discovered and he is charged. This is cruel for him. How can this point be emphasized? - He must subsequently kill himself, not in remorse but in despair. (72)
Styan therefore proposes that the task of the playwright then in this case is to arrange this questioning material of cause and effect in such a way as to keep the spectator guessing. As this arrangement is done, the playwright comes up with an exciting exposition, introducing the situation; the reasons for it would make an intriguing complication, since no simple solution would present itself; the crisis of feeling would follow naturally with the indictment; and the suicide would supply a moving denouement, or resolution of events. In my case, I used the questioning information to create the plot of the play. I also employed Seymour Chatman in his work *Story and Discourse* (1998) argues:

The events of a story are traditionally said to constitute an array called “plot.” Aristotle defined plot (mythos) as the “arrangement of incidents.” The events in a story are turned into a plot by its discourse, the modus of presentation. (42)

This meant that as a playwright, I would constitute the action in my play in a reasonable way that would form the sense in the meaning of the play that is the plot.

Closely related to Bergman and Mark’s analysis is Carl E. Bain in *The Norton Introduction to Literature* (1995) who argues that all stories, all individuals are embedded in a context or a setting of time and space. It can be limited to only a few minutes or days. The time can be contemporary or historical. Bain states that the exposition introduces the characters, situation, time and place. The rising action shows the events that complicate the situation and intensify the conflict or introduce the new ones. He defines the climax as the point where luck changes. For example, a character has had their way but suddenly things change. The mainspring of plot in a play is conflict, which can be physical, psychological, social, or all the three.

The conflict and setting would not exist without characters. According to Bain, a character is someone who acts, appears, or is referred to as playing a part in a work of art. He states that there are also major and minor characters. The major characters are those seen more of over a long period as contrasted with
the minor characters. Bergman on the other hand says that a character is a person created by the playwright to carry the action, language, ideas, and emotions of the play. They can be round or flat characters. In the first of these stages, the exposition, I used the characters to give essential background information, introduce the characters, and the conflict.

I also looked at what other Kenyan playwrights have written and considered how the content of their plays would inform my writing a play in terms of establishing a gap in their works. I did this by narrowing down on the thematic concerns by selected playwrights. Kenyan thematic coverage by Kenyan playwrights varies from colonial to post colonial struggles of the Kenyan society. These include a corpus of issues such as political leadership, gender discrimination, national pride and imperialism. In my literature review, I selected Ngugi wa Thiong’o in the play I Will Marry when I Want and Francis Imbuga in the play Betrayal in the City.

In I Will Marry when I Want, Ngugi wa Thiong’o focuses on post-colonial Africa and how neo-colonialism has served to benefit imperialists rather than poor Africans. The play centers around a Kenyan farmer, Kiguunda and his family who attempt to safeguard their small piece of land from imperialists who intent to purchase it. Their title deed dissatisfies them because they would be having more land. Other Mau Mau groups had also fallen victims because after independence, they sold their pieces of land to the imperialists who were more than willing to buy it. Ngugi effectively condemns land grabbing which is perpetrated by the egocentric greedy politicians which is an evil in the given society he writes about.

The oppression evident in Ngugi’s play I Will Marry when I Want is still evident in the society today. In Ngugi’s work, I noted that leaders use their power to oppress their subjects whether directly or indirectly. My point of deviation from Ngugi’s work was that Ngugi points at leadership and power at the national level, whereas my attention in writing the play was leadership and the exercising of power at the secondary school level. In writing the play, I depicted
how power can be used in a school set up to enforce either the right or the wrong morals. I also observed that Ngugi focuses on the dynamics of land ownership after independence. In my writing, I filled the gap in playwriting by addressing a very different concern; the question of morality in a school set up.

Imbuga’s in the play, Betrayal in the City, condemns the problems of independence and freedom in postcolonial Africa. In the words of a character in the play He says, “it was better while we waited. Now we have nothing to look forward to. We have killed our past and are busy killing our future.”(17) Among the problems, he addresses include betrayal, nepotism and dictatorship. Imbuga condemns bad governance in postcolonial Kenya, which is characterized by dictatorship, suppression and assassinations. I noted that the play revolves around leadership at the national level and how it affects the citizens. It is indeed after recognizing this fact that I decided to write a play that deviated from that norm and hence focused on the modern society in the area of teaching and learning that involves both teachers and students that is dependent on the need for mentorship and role modeling.

**Theoretical Framework**

John Lawson in the book Theory and Technique of Playwriting (1960) argues that the theory of dramatic art holds that the dramatic process follows certain general laws, derived from the function of drama. Some of these include that the play has an objective to pose certain issues to the society. He states that this might not however be a conscious intention of the writer since the reader is free to understand a work of art from whichever dimension. In addition to these, Lawson gives laws that the playwright follows which generally summarize the structural analysis and the arrangement of the play. The laws comprise of the law of conflict, dramatic action and the unity in terms of action. The exposition, continuity, climax and dialogue are part of these laws.

Regarding the dramatic conflict, he says, “Since drama deals with social relationships, a dramatic conflict must have a social conflict” (163). He further states,
Mere action is nothing, pile it on as you may. But character is subordinate to the action, because the action, however limited it may be, represents a sum of ‘given relations’ which is wider than the actions of any individual, and which determines the individuals actions.” (280)

My writing followed these laws to outline the map of the play and further creating characters, which through meaningful dialogue resulted to the dramatic action. I employed the law of conflict to create the exposition continuity and ultimately the climax of the play.

Susana Onega and Jose Angel Garcia in their book *Narratology* (1996) argue that narratology as a theory happens in various works of art such as in novels, films, plays, diaries among others. They define a narrative as the semiotic representation of a series of events meaningfully connected in a temporal and casual way. They further argue that each genre allows for a specific presentation of the fibula, different point of view strategies, and various degrees of narratorial intrusiveness and different handlings of time. Drama as a genre generally tends to focus on a significant and clearly defined action, with a strong plot based on cause and effect. The verbal text of a play is only the basis for the actual performance, which is a different and constantly changeable interpretation of the text and in fact, on every occasion it is a new text for the audience.

With these concepts in mind, and considering that a play tells a story, I wrote the play using characters, which I exploited to dramatize the series of events in the play. I arranged these events of the story to construct the plot of the play. Intertwined in the plot was the time in which the characters spoke and existed at various levels of the play. The idea of time in terms of when an event occurred in relation to the other informed my creation of a plot that was all cohesive to eventually communicate the thematic concern of the final play. The action, as an element of the play, was therefore very crucial in helping me tell the series of events thus come up with the play. Narratology informed me in developing the plot in the play; the exposition, the rising action, the climax, the
falling action and the resolution. This is by the interpretation of the argument that the play is based on cause and effect. For instance, in my writing, I had to portray characters, who are not satisfied by the status quo and then identify the cause of their dissatisfaction. Such an arrangement aided me to build up the action in the play as the characters interact.

The same argument on the plot is further elaborated by Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle in Literature, Criticism and Theory (2004) who define a narrative as “a series of events in a specific order—with a beginning, a middle and an end” (53). Generally, Bennett and Royle put emphasis on plot—a story always has a definite plot. They identify the fundamental distinction in narrative theory to be that between story and discourse—“story involves the events or actions which the narrator would like us to believe occurred, the events (explicitly or implicitly) represented. Discourse, on the other hand, involves the way in which these events are recounted, how they get told, the organization of the telling” (55). Despite this distinction, story and discourse can never be separated. In most cases, story and discourse are intertwined. Their argument concerning stories is worth quoting at length:

Stories are everywhere. Not only do we tell stories, but stories tell us: if stories are everywhere, we are also stories. The telling of a story is always bound up with power, with questions of authority, property and domination. Stories are multiple: there is always more than one story. Stories always have something to tell us about stories themselves: they always involve self-reflexive and metafictional dimensions (52).

My task in writing the play was to deliberately organize the action and the events in such a way that allowed it to have a beginning, middle and end. This was with the result of creating a story that would speak about the society. The order of events was therefore very critical in telling the story.

**Methodology**
For the purposes of informing my writing this play, I read books on the elements of drama, creative writing and written plays. I used the elements of
drama to write the play. By reviewing these books, I was able to develop my statement of the problem and the objectives. It also enlightened me on the state of plays written in Kenya and their effectiveness in addressing pertinent issues in the society.

I used the observation method in this project. The material of the play was informed by personal experiences and observing what happens in some secondary school set-ups. These comprised of my experience as secondary school teacher and other teachers and students experiences in the same environment. This inspired me to dramatize what happens in the institutions of learning.

I also used conversational interview in collecting information. Through daily conversation with various students in different private schools, I found out that many girls have been victims of a morally decadent society. Experienced teachers who have worked in different schools also narrated what they have experienced. Their stories inspired me to imagine a moral conflict in such a setting.

I used Styan’s outline to create and write a play about a secondary school. I created the questioning set up in which for instance I interrogated the teacher’s/ teachers’ drive in their line of duty, the principal’s motivation and goal as he runs the school. Other questioning material included, what circumstances do the students find themselves in whether willingly or unwillingly? How do these characters relate and what comes out of such relationships. The arrangement these questions informed my creation of a cause and effect pattern that resulted in the plot of the play. I created the plot by deliberately choosing the material that suited the exposition, the complication and finally the resolution. This helped me create the necessary suspense in my writing that ensured the flow of the play.
**Scope and Limitation**

This work was an effort at writing a play. My focus was the setting of a secondary school with the major concern of the morality touching on students and the teachers. As such, my primary characters were teachers and students. I limited myself to the setting of a school around which the action and the conflict of the play revolved.

The play was limited to dramatizing some of the activities that happen in a secondary school set up comprising of activities in the classroom such as teaching and the learning process, interaction between teachers and the leadership model of the school principal.
WATER BUT WINE

Characters

Mr. J. Iscariot     Principal of the school
Mr. Muimu          Senior teacher
Miss Haja          Teacher
Mr. Kasuku         Teacher

Nanjala, Nalangu, Petty Kiindo, Mercy, Nempolos Ororei, Taby Shida
Teachers

Students

Gateman
ACT 1
Scene 1

Inside Form Four classroom. The walls of the room are poorly finished. The roof is not an exception: the iron sheets have rusted out of age and have some holes at different points. It is on a Monday morning. The classroom has about forty female students of ages ranging from sixteen to twenty years old. The room is packed to capacity to the extent that there is hardly any space for a teacher’s desk at the front. There is a portable blackboard squeezed in the extreme end of the classroom with a lot of writing on it. Statements such as WE WANT TO STUDY! ACTION NOW! WE ARE TIRED OF CORRUPTION! Can be clearly seen.

The furniture in the room is old and rackety. The students are seated on their desks, most abnormally quiet and wearing gloomy faces except for a few who are talking to their desk mates and friends. The attitude on various faces depicts boredom, anxiety and in some, a ‘I don’t care visage.’ It is the first lesson. Miss Haja majestically walks into the classroom for the English lesson.

She has a box of chalk, a folder full of papers, two textbooks and a play in her hands. She gives a stern and a warning look to the girls who are talking and as if on a second thought, chooses to ignore them. As usual, she starts the lesson with an anecdote.

Miss Haja:  (Looking around to ensure every student is alert. Total silence in the room.)

My story today is entitled, ‘The Fox and the Crow‘ A fox saw a crow fly off with a piece of liver in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree. That is for me as I am a fox,” said Master Kibwe, and he walked up to the foot of the tree.

(She walks from one end of the room towards the other as she narrates.)

“Good day Mistress Crow,” he cried. (Smiling) “You look great today; your feathers glossy and your eyes so bright! I am sure your voice surpasses that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one song
from you that I may greet you as the queen of birds.”  (Voices of excitement and sighs from the girls.) You can guess what the crow did.

**Some Students:**  (Shouting with excitement.) She started singing!

(As if on cue, there is loud banging on the iron sheet roof. The sound is from the builders who are doing some repair on the roof.)

**Miss Haja:**  (Ignores the bang.) You are right! The crow lifted her head and began to crow her best, but the very moment she did that, the piece of liver fell to the ground, only to be snapped by Master Kibwe. “That will do,” he said. “That was all I wanted.”

**Students:**  (Clapping.) Thank you Miss Haja.

(A piece of stone falls on the desk of one of the students. The girl jumps up out of fright. There is general commotion. The students settle down after realizing it was harmless.)

**Miss Haja:**  As usual, write down three moral lessons that you learn from that story.

(Walks around the class checking the students’ books as they write. She then walks back to the front.)

Ok girls! Good morning.

**Students:**  (Answering in unison) Good morning madam.

**Miss Haja:**  How was your weekend?

**Students:**  It was fine.

**Miss Haja:**  Well, here we are again; let us put our minds back to business.

(Picks a piece of chalk from the chalk box and turns to write on the blackboard.) Class captain, how many times will I say that the blackboard should be spotless every time I walk into class?

**Nanjala:**  (Standing up to go and clean the blackboard.) I am sorry madam. I cleaned it this morning.

(Turns to face the rest of the students and sneers at them) But they keep writing on it as soon as I clean it.

**Miss Haja:**  You should be in charge; you are the leader here.

(Looking at the students) The rest of you, this board here is not your exercise book! I will severely punish all of you if this occurs again.
(Turning to look at the board. Gets shocked at what is written on the board.)
Who wrote all that?

**Nanjala:** Anxiously The students are concerned about the circumstances in the school. They are requesting that they have the right to be treated as students and provided with the right environment to study.

**Miss Haja:** Is this the correct way of doing things?
(Silence) Nanjala?

**Taby:** Not a soul will listen to us. We ...

**Miss Haja:** Hold your peace young woman! I did not speak to you. Nanjala, you ought to learn how handle things in the right way. That’s why you are a leader. This is exactly the kind of leadership we are complaining about in this country.
(Raising her voice) Have you heard of the word “impunity” on the local media? Do you know what impunity is? You don’t! You are already causing us to waste the time for our Literature lesson. This is a Monday morning, the beginning of a week. If you start a week in such a sluggish manner and with such indiscipline, you will finish it on a worse note. Sit down.
(Attempting to calm down. Everyone is quiet as she peruses through her notes. Finally, she looks up.)

Last week, we attempted to define the term Literature. We clearly stated that Literature is not merely for entertainment. It is to be analyzed, thought over; it is to trigger our minds to think, what else did I say? Nalangu.

**Nalangu:** (Hesitates a little bit.) You also said that Literature mirrors the society. It is an imaginative work of art that addresses issues in the society.

**Miss Haja:** Very good. So today, I want you to put this statement down. Literature is philosophical in nature in the sense that... (There is a knock in the door. The principal walks in with two other men.)
**Principal:** Sorry madam but you can go on with the lesson. We will carry on with our business.

(Stunned, Miss Haja remains quiet. The men go round the room taking the measurement as the principal monitors them. The silence is too loud, some students start coughing mischievously.)

The trio walks out after two minutes.

**Miss Haja:** Ok. Let us proceed. I was stating that...

(A student raises up her hand.)

Yes Ororei, what is it?

**Ororei:** Excuse me teacher, so are you saying that what has just happened will be History if it is not recorded down as Literature? That if it is recorded as Literature, it will happen again?

(The rest burst out laughing.)

**Miss Haja:** You ought to be more serious than that. If I trace any sense of sarcasm again in your statements, this will be the last time you are seen in my class. Is that clear to all of you?

**Students:** (In unison) Yes teacher.

**Miss Haja:** (A bit hesitant and not sure of what she was saying earlier on.)

So, which novels or plays have you read? Share them out with the rest of the class and illustrate how they mirror the society.

(A student shoots up her hand)

Yes?

**Mercy:** The Burdens by John Ruganda. The main character, Wamala, is a father of two children and husband of Tinka. Due to poverty, he seeks solace in alcohol so that he can forget his problems. His wife can no longer stand this and ends up killing him. The children are to be taken to an orphanage and Tinka has to go to prison. Broken families like Wamala’s are very common in the society today.

**Miss Haja:** Very good. Did we all hear that?

**Students:** (In unison) Yes.

**Miss Haja:** (Raising her voice) Then write it down! How many times will I tell you that intellectuals do not just stare into the space when important points are being said? They write them down!
(A student whispers loud enough.) How were we to know it’s an important point?

Miss Haja:  (Clearly annoyed) Who said that?
(No one responds. There is absolute silence in the room.)
I asked who said that.
(No response. Every student pretends to be busy writing.)
Ok. If you can’t speak then I will tell you what to do.
(In a loud commanding voice.) All of you kneel down at once!

Students:  (Surprised by the turn of events, they kneel down. Some murmurs can be heard.) Who said that? I did not say it.

Miss Haja:  (Ignoring their complaints) Today you will learn that I am the teacher and that your rightful place remains a student. I have noted that you have lately become rather unruly. Now pick your books and write what Mercy said. (Goes round the class checking.) I said write! If you have not written it in two minutes, count your day lost in the cold wet weather doing a punishment.
(She goes round checking the books)
If I tick your work, stand up and sit on your chair.
(After checking three books, she realizes that checking all the books will take a lot of time.)
Stand up everyone. Nanjala, collect all the Literature exercise books after the lesson and bring them to the staffroom.

Miss Haja:  Let us move on with our lesson. We still need other examples.
(After a brief silence, a student raises her hand.)

Student:   The play Betrayal in the City by Francis Imbuga. Imbuga wrote the play to address the politically engineered assassinations in Kenya.

Miss Haja:  That is a very good example. Clap for her.
(The students clap.)
I now need you to give examples of novels in the same way as you have done regarding the plays. Organize yourselves in groups of four and discuss that. I will pick one member of the group at random and have them tell the rest of the class what they have discussed. Start now!
(There is a bit of noise in the class as the students organize themselves into the groups. The principal walks into the class.)

**Principal:**  *(Looking around with a stern countenance.)* His eyes finally rest on Miss Haja.

*(Harsh voice.)*

How many times have I warned you not to allow noise making in class? Are you aware this is our first candidate class?

*(Miss Haja stares back at him. Turning to face the students)*

And to you students, be warned. I am tempted to send some of you for suspension. You seem not to know what brought you to The Light on the Hill Academy. Let me remind you, in case you have forgotten: the school mission is to shed light on the dark life of a girl like you seated here. Let it be known to you that I am a respectable man of God and I will not thus allow His name to be put into shame by students. Put that into your small heads, otherwise you will not stay in my school.

**Nanjala:** *(Raises her hand)*

**Principal:** What is it?

**Nanjala:** We are very sorry. We promise to change.

**Principal:** You would rather do that, the sooner the better. I hope that is said by all of you, otherwise I will not take any of this nonsense from you. I guarantee that each of you will carry her cross and die for her sin.

*(Gives the students a stern look and charges out.)*

**Miss Haja:** *(Takes some time to recover)* Where were we?

*(The girls are all quiet, not knowing what to make of the situation.)*

Take a minute and jot in your exercise books any novels you have read and attempt to show how relevant they are in today’s society. There is silence as they write.

**Student:** *(With her hand up)* Excuse me madam?

**Miss Haja:** What is it?

**Student:** Can I give my example?

**Miss Haja:** I said write! Are you deaf?

*(The students are busy writing. There is a knock on the door. Miss Haja walks towards the door. Before she is there, the principal walks in.)*
Principal: Excuse me madam. I need to address the girls.

Miss Haja: (Making way for him.) Go right ahead.

(Miss Haja walks out.)

Principal: (To the students.) As you are all aware, we carried out pregnancy tests on all of you three days ago. The results are out. Whatever you sow, you shall reap.

(Goes silent to let the information sink.)

It is a pity that three of the students tested positive. Two are from this very class.

(Sighs can be heard from the students.)

It concerns me that we are teaching prostitutes in The Light on the Hill Academy. I am utterly embarrassed to be the principal of such a school. I wouldn’t be shocked if all of you tested HIV positive, because that is the next test we are carrying out this very day in the afternoon. Woe unto you if you test HIV positive.

(Looking at some students suspiciously.)

That will be the last time your name is mentioned in this school.

(A student raises her hand. He points at her.) You!

Student: (Fear can be felt in her voice) We feel traumatized and we need counselling.

Principal: (With annoyance in his voice.) You do not need any form of counselling! You are a perverse generation. No amount of mercy will redeem you! By now, you should have known how to put your legs together!

(Looks sternly at the girl)

I am not ready to spend any money to pay anyone to come and talk to you. I can put that money into better use.

(Silence as he looks around)

Have I made myself clear?

Students: (With muted voices) Yes.

Principal: There is no lunch for you today.

(Suppressed and surprised shocked voices from the girls)
Quiet! I said no lunch today. Assemble in the hall at lunchtime for compulsory HIV testing.

(He storms out.)

(There is noise from the students as Miss Haja walks in.)

Ororei: (Has not yet realized the teacher has walked in and is busy talking loudly to the desk mate.) This school is fake!

Miss Haja: (Projecting her voice for all to hear.) Silence!

(Grave silence in the room.)

Nalangu: Madam, can I please say something before we go on?

Miss Haja: What is it about and must it be said now?

Nalangu: It is a request madam. It is a burning issue.

Miss Haja: Ok. Go ahead.

Nalangu: As Form Fours we met over the weekend and discussed a few issues concerning our academics. We fear that we might fail in our exams since our lessons are constantly being interrupted. We are losing a lot of time. We request to know if something can be done.

(A knock interrupts, a student walks in and whispers to Miss Haja’s ears then walks out.)

Miss Haja: The principal needs to talk to Mercy.

Nanjala: (Raising up her hand.) We plead with you madam, we trust you. We have observed that you are the only approachable and sensible teacher we can talk to. Besides, we have reported this to the administration. Our wailing seems to fall on deaf ears.

Miss Haja: We are already wasting time. Is this the right channel to convey your complaints? You very well know the official channel of communication in this school.

Several voices: We plead with you, please madam....

Miss Haja: I am not sure I am the right person to handle this matter.

Students: (Some with varied shouts.) You can help us. If you do not give us the right advice, we are going to transfer from this school.

Miss Haja: I will endeavor to air your complaints to the principal. Meanwhile, one of the best things you can do, and which is in your hands, is to make use of every little time you have. Make use of teachers who are available
in and out of class. You should also form discussions groups among yourselves. Soar like eagles despite the storm.

**Nanjala:** Thank you madam, on behalf of the class, we take your advice seriously and we appreciate.

**Miss Haja:** Can we go back to our topic? Right.

(Opening one of the textbooks.)
The next important point we need to make is that a work of art cannot exist without characters.

(Moves to the board and writes the heading, CHARACTERS.)
A character is someone who acts, appears or is referred to as playing a part in a work of art. He/she is a participant that the writer of the work chooses deliberately to convey his message.

(She is now walking along the narrow space between the student’s desks to ensure the students are taking notes. She observes that one of the girls is simply pretending to write.)
Hell is for liars like you. You have my permission to continue acting.

(Some students have written what she has said because they have not realized the teacher is addressing a particular student.)

(There is general laughter as some students laugh at each other.)

**Ororei:** (Turning to the desk mate.) You really wrote that!

(Reaching out to the student’s book and reading out aloud.)
Hell is for liars...

(Some students burst out in laughter.)

**Nalangu:** (In an excited voice.) Guess this is still part of Literature!

**Miss Haja:** But when you fail, do not blame the teacher. The blame game does not work for long, because it cannot go past the K.C.S.E. results. When you complete school, each of you will go your own way. Then you will face the world all alone.

(To the student who was not writing.)

(Harshly.) Walk outside and learn from there. Carry your exercise book and pen then sit down right at the door where I can see you. You should have all the notes well taken by the end of the lesson.

(The student timidly walks out and seats down beside the door.)
There are various types of characters. The very common types are the major and the minor characters.

**Student:** Pardon.

**Miss Haja:** I will repeat that point for the sake of the poor souls in this room. (After a moment’s silence. More slowly and articulate at this time.) I said that there are various types of characters. (Pause. Writes on the board, Major characters, Minor characters.) The common ones are the major characters and minor characters. Open page sixty-two of your textbooks. (The few students who have the textbooks open them. The rest attempt to see from the closest book available. Miss Haja opens her book.) Can one of you read the first paragraph? (Looking to see if any student has her hand up. Points at one student) Yes.

**Student:** Characters are.... (There is a knock on the door. Miss Haja goes to check)

**Miss Haja:** (The senior teacher peeping.) Yes sir?

**Mr. Muimu:** I am sorry for interrupting. The principal insists that the students must come out so that they can go and welcome the white men. I mean the sponsors.

**Miss Haja:** But I am in the middle of a lesson with them. This is going to interrupt learning to a very great extent; can’t it wait until break time?

**Mr. Muimu:** I’ve tried explaining to him that but you know how headstrong he is. He insists that the school belongs to him and he can do all that he wants.

**Miss Haja:** Ok. (Turning to the students) The principal needs all of you outside his office. We will proceed tomorrow during our afternoon lesson. Nanjala, collect the books as I instructed. (To the student outside.) Stand up and give me your book! (Walks out attempting to keep her calm.)

**Some Students:** (Shouting and complaining.) We are sick and tired of all these. When will we ever have sufficient time to study?
Scene 2

In the staffroom, a ten by ten room that accommodates seven teachers, there is a long table in the middle of the room and three wooden chairs on either side of the table such that the teachers face each other when they are seated. One more chair is stationed at the extreme end of the table so that all in all the room can accommodate sitting space for seven. There is a small notice board that has the school timetable, school rules, some newspaper cuttings and part of Martin Luther’s Speech, ‘I Have a Dream’ and Langston Hughes ‘A Dream Deferred.’ The other piece of furniture is a small bookshelf at the far corner of the room, which has an assortment of books. The time is mid morning just before eleven. This is before the students break for the first break of the day.

Mr. Kasuku is seated on the furthest end of the tables and is busy reading and making notes. He stands up to check the timetable on the notice board, glances at his watch and looks back at the timetable. He then walks back to his seat, pulls a book from his bag and sits down to continue working.

Miss Haja walks into the room with books held onto her chest.

**Miss Haja:** (To Mr. Kasuku) Hello there, you seem so serious today, shall I just say you are preparing for a major examination?

**Mr. Kasuku:** (Looking up from his work to face her. In a deliberate, slow pace.) Wow! What shall we say! The queen of England has just walked in. (Standing up.) Shall I give her a standing ovation? (Bowing) Or bow to greet her?

**Miss Haja:** Cut out all that acting. How are you?

**Mr. Kasuku:** (Still joking) I am fine your majesty! I am so honoured to salute your highness. (Moving towards her chair and pulls it out for her.) Sit please. Your Majesty. Feel at home!

**Miss Haja:** (Sitting down and choosing to ignore his gestures. Her books still held onto her chest.) You seem to forget what kind of place we are in! (Sarcastic) This is Light Academy. City on a Hill? Or is it a candle on a hill that cannot be hidden? Whatever!
**Mr. Kasuku:** (Changing the topic.) You can put your books on the table. I said feel at home. I mean, behave as you do when you are at home. Do you still hold on to your bag when you go into your house? Rather room? (Walking to his end of the table, raises his hand to act like he is holding a handbag.) Ok. Let us imagine this is you. You open the door, walk into the small room. (Imitates her walking style.) You put the bag on the table. (Hesitates.) Then remove your stilettos.

**Miss Haja:** (Eyes him suspiciously. She is not sure what his intentions are.) What are you driving at Mr. Kasuku?

**Mr. Kasuku:** I have always said you are an extremely protective person. Not that you protect others, but that you protect others from getting to you. You love yourself so much such that there is no room for anyone else to love you.

**Miss Haja:** (Still confused but acting composed.) Why should that concern you?

**Mr. Kasuku:** (Happy that she does not understand him.) I said put your books on the table. You will need to learn how to create a relaxed environment around yourself as long as you work here. Otherwise, the opposition and harshness in The Light on the Hill Academy is enough to give you a throbbing headache for the rest of your life.

**Miss Haja:** (The point has finally dawned on her. She places the books on the table.) I think there are other critical issues to discuss. (Pointing at his seat.) Have a sit sir. You see...

**Mr. Kasuku:** (Sits) So why all that sarcasm in your statements? You do not seem to be in the best of moods.

**Miss Haja:** Yes. That’s exactly it. Do you want to know why?

(Adjusting to adopt a more comfortable posture in her seat.)

**Mr. Kasuku:** So what has happened this time round? The activist in you does not allow you to let the sleeping dogs lie. You have to arouse them eh?

**Miss Haja:** Look here, it is not a matter of a sleeping dog, this is an issue of a running dog that barks at everyone it sets its eyes on, polluting the very quiet atmosphere that God gave Adam and Eve. I suspect that this dog
can also bite innocent people. Immediate action ought to be taken against it.

Mr. Kasuku: (Feigning interest) Go on. Where is that dog?

Miss Haja: I had the first double lesson in the morning in Form Four. I have not taught a thing.

Mr. Kasuku: Why not? You are one of the most dedicated teachers around.

Miss Haja: The interruptions were too many. First, are the builders who are working on the very roof of the class I was in. How were the students supposed to hear what I was saying? Where were they over the weekend?

Mr. Kasuku: Your problem is that you take things too seriously. If I was the one, I would have simply given the girls work and sat down to fantasize over my weekend. In any case, it is a Monday morning. Who wants to be active on a Monday morning?

Miss Haja: On the contrary, you are too casual. We have a mandate in this school. We are here to teach and not to laze around. Anyhow, a stone fell from the roof and hit a student’s desk. What if it was a piece of wood from the dilapidated roof and hit one of the girl’s head? Let us assume it has an old rusty sharp pointed front, which is a great possibility.

Mr. Kasuku: That is not your problem. The parents can worry about that. I do not care for them because they are so gullible. Why do they agree to everything that the principal tells them without questioning a little bit? The running of this school is founded on lies and they all know that. When are they waiting to stand up and demand to know the truth? Maybe they are waiting for the old rusty sharp pointed nail to pierce a girl on the head. Yes, that is what they are waiting for. Let me tell you Miss Haja, the sooner it happens, the better. This will wake them up to the reality of the situation. Then they can stop burying their heads in the sand, and respond to the children’s predicament.

Miss Haja: (After some silence) As if that was not enough, the principal kept coming into the classroom for more than enough times. He even demanded that he wanted to address the students in the middle of my lesson! He seemed disturbed about something.
Mr. Kasuku: He has always openly admired you. That is not a secret. May be he was just coming to see your beautiful face so that he can forget his yesterday’s long evening characterized by excessive nagging from his wife and then go to settle down in his office.

Miss Haja: (Raising her voice) Get more serious. He even reprimanded me for not maintaining a quiet class. Is that also part of the admiration?

Mr. Kasuku: Sure. Just in an attempt to confuse the girls’ minds. Men behave exactly that way. Anyway, if there is anything disturbing him, then we are sure to find out before the end of the day. We all know that secrets do not last long in this school: The Light on the Hill Academy.

Miss Haja: (Yawning) Why am I tired and it is still morning? Guess I will have to go and buy some tea.

(As she stands, Mr. Muimu walks in.)

Mr. Muimu: (In an obviously jovial mood.) Good morning fellow workers in Iscariot’ vineyard?

Miss Haja: Fine and how are you?

Mr. Muimu: I am doing well as you can see. (Pulls a chair and sits.)

Mr. Kasuku: (Imitates him but on a light note) Yes, we can see.

Miss Haja: (Walking towards the door.) I am going to buy tea. I feel starved.

Mr. Kasuku: Before I go and buy some tea for Miss Haja, can Mr. Muimu update us on what is happening in the school? I mean the latest news. He is the big man’s right hand man, as he likes to put it.

Mr. Muimu: Man, you are at it again. What news do I have that you do not have?

(Attempting to avoid the question. He faces Mr. Kasuku.) Who gave you permission to buy tea (pointing at Miss Haja) for her?

Mr. Kasuku: Do I need anyone’s permission to buy tea for this girl here? You are an old guard, the sooner you accept that fact the better. Modern city women are ashamed of walking with big-bellied buggers like you...

Miss Haja: (She is not amused by the turn of events. Raising her voice.) No one is going to buy tea for me. Please do not make me a topic of discussion.
Mr. Muimu: (Addressing Mr. Kasuku.) Let’s not get personal, that was just on a light note. I do not intend to interrupt your happy moment sir.

Miss Haja: (Attempting to pacify the situation) Mr. Muimu, have the sponsors arrived?

Mr. Muimu: Not yet but they are expected any time from now. The students are already gathered and waiting at the gate. The head girl already has a well-written speech to read to them as soon as they settle down in the hall.

Mr. Kasuku: (Shocked by the news.) Does that mean there are no classes this morning? Then I have no business here as things stand now.

Miss Haja: Why Mr. Kasuku? I guess we will also be needed in the hall, most likely leading the welcome delegation.

Mr. Kasuku: Are you a stranger in Jerusalem? You seem to forget that you are not needed when it comes to administrative issues of the school. Your job is to teach and teach only. Full stop! That is if the students are in class.

Miss Haja: (Addressing Mr. Muimu) Do you mean to say that the teachers will not be invited to the meeting in the hall?

Mr. Kasuku: (Interrupting) Miss Haja, have you been invited? Do you have an invitation card or a personal invitation from the big man? VIP sitting?

Miss Haja: (She is lost for words. She cannot believe the state of affairs.) I mean, I thought it was obvious that teachers...

Mr. Muimu: Teachers are not a part of this. They might cause unnecessary trouble.

Miss Haja: What trouble? On whose side are you? (Raising her voice in desperation) On one side the lessons are interrupted after every five minutes. On the other side, the teacher does not know what is happening in the school. How are we supposed to help the girls if we just remain puppets?

Mr. Muimu: Miss Haja, you trouble yourself too much over what is not important. Do you get some pay at the end of the month? The answer is yes you do. Do you have a job to report to every morning? Yes you do. You should be grateful to God. There are people in this town who do not enjoy such privileges.
**Mr. Kasuku:** That is true Miss Haja. Why bother with what you cannot change? This is not your school, and in addition, you do not have a daughter in here. I say let the sleeping dogs sleep!

**Miss Haja:** You seem to forget about the amount of salary you are given and that is when the principal decides to or when you complain to him that you might report to work the following morning with the same clothes you are in because the landlady locked your house that morning.

**Mr. Muimu:** That is what I wanted to talk to you about when I came in before you people interrupted me with your tea party. (Lowers his voice) Listen, the principal has said that he will consider increasing your salaries if you cooperate during this time when the sponsors are around. He has also sent me to tell you that he appreciates the work you are doing. He has in fact given me some money for lunch. I know the rest of the teachers will be here before lunchtime.

(Some silence and a moment of anxiety.)

**Miss Haja:** (This disclosure surprises Miss Haja and Mr. Kasuku.) I do not know where all this is leading but let it be clear that my first assignment here is to teach. I hope the smell I sense by far is not that of blackmail.

**Mr. Kasuku:** For once, I agree with madam here. That sounds fishy. This does not mean I will not take the money he is offering, but why the sudden benevolence?

**Miss Haja:** Is that why the principal has been apprehensive today? He looked a bit disturbed and I think there must be more to this. Mr. Muimu, come clean. Are you sure, you do not know what is happening?

**Mr. Muimu:** All that I have told you is all I know. If I knew more, I would have told you.

**Miss Haja:** I feel like my passion and ambition for life is dying. I should be in an environment where I find satisfaction in my work. This is not the case here. The more I commit myself to do my best, the more frustrated I become. Why am I here?

**Mr. Kasuku:** (He takes her hand and leads her to the notice board. Her thoughts are a bit distant so she does not resist this gesture. She follows
him. Mr. Muimu watches on. Mr. Kasuku begins to read Langston Hughes’ poem to her. He does this in a soft voice and a slow pace.)

A Dream Deferred
What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?
ACT 2

It is around eleven thirty in the morning. The setting is in the principal’s office. There is a desk and a chair behind it so that the principal faces the door when seated. There is a bench on one side of the office, a visitor’s chair directly opposite the principal. There is a Good News Bible and a diary on the table. On his right is a shelf stocked with various books. The principal, a tall average built mid-aged man, is seated on his chair writing in a book.

(There is a knock on the door.)

Principal: Who is there? Come right inside.

Mr. Muimu: (Walking in and extending his hand for a handshake.)

Good afternoon sir. I have just been informed that you wanted to see me.

Principal: (Cheerfully) Oh yes. Good afternoon and have a chair.

How is the school running?

Mr. Muimu: Very well Sir. According to me, everything is just progressing, as you would love it. As always, you are the right man to head this school. The students are pleased with your wisdom in running the school. They are also grateful that through you they were able to get sponsors who pay their school fees and give them pocket money. Some have sent special appreciation to you because, as they put it, if you had not brought them from the village, and gave them accommodation in your home here in the town, they would still be wallowing in the miasma of abject poverty back in the village. One said that by now she would maybe have five starved children and a hopeless future. The teachers on the other hand admire the outstanding ability and prowess you have displayed in the administration of the school. They admit that if they ever put up a school of their own in future, they would run it exactly as you do.

Principal: Thank you. I am very happy to hear that. It is good for them to know that leadership is given by God and the Bible commands that they should respect and obey their leaders. You know I am a staunch
christian and a pastor. Therefore, the school must be one of the best. I need everyone in this compound to know that the services I offer in this school cannot be found anywhere else. This is of course bearing in mind that the fees paid by the parents is minimal compared to those in the surrounding schools. I also give teachers permission when they need it unlike what happens in other working environments.  

**Mr. Muimu:** Very true sir, we must push ourselves to perform very well during this year’s K.C.S.E.  

**Principal:** That is very well spoken. You are my right hand man.  

**Mr. Muimu:** A........a..a don’t forget that I am just the same as the other teachers. In fact, some of them are more trained than I am. Of course, I need not talk about the teaching experience of some of the other teachers. It is by far....  

**Principal:** *(Laughing cunningly)* Do not speak such nonsense. David did not have any experience, but when the prophet Samuel went looking for a king, he had to choose him. Leadership positions are given depending on how loyal people are. Have you not seen what is happening in the country right now? People are in leadership positions not because they merit or qualify but because the appointing authority trusts them. This will most likely be a relative or a tribe’s man. Imagine what can happen when you surround yourself with people from another tribe then out of jealousy they decide to take you to court so that they can get all your hard-earned wealth.  

**Mr. Muimu:** That is wise speaking. You are very right. I have even heard people going to the extent of killing their employers so that they can inherit what the employer has.  

**Principal:** I trust you. Besides, you are my kinsman. You understand our culture. I need your support as I also help you. Some of the other teachers are too critical and they want to question every single decision I make. They want everything done right. We are not angels. I sometimes regret why I ever employed some of them.  

*(Silence as he scratches his head in thought. Lowers his voice.)*
Muimu, ensure you keep your eyes open and your ears alert. I do not want a mere teacher to take my position.

**Mr. Muimu:** You have my word. I know everything that happens in every corner of this compound, and I will inform you as soon as I smell a rat.

**Principal:** That is it. You have not told me what the teachers’ response was when you gave them the lunch allowance I gave you.

**Mr. Muimu:** Oh! I was to tell you. They appreciated the token. They can’t wait for lunchtime. But you know...

**Principal:** Go on, what is it?

**Mr. Muimu:** Mr. Antony just walked in when I was making the announcement. He just looked at me, sneered, walked to his desk, picked his physics textbook and went to class. He did not give any comment. I do not know what to make of his behaviour.

**Principal:** That is nothing to worry about. Antony has always been skeptical about my leadership, but he is a harmless man who will leave the school when he gets very bored by the system. However, I will sack him if I realize there is more to this.

**Mr. Muimu:** You will also need to think about Miss Haja. She has been too critical and inquisitive about your leadership lately. She says that she suspects that the lunch allowance was not just out of your generous heart but that there must be something surreptitious about it. She has been complaining too much lately.

**Principal:** Miss Haja is as they say an empty debe that makes a lot of noise. The only action she can take is complaining. I think the talking satisfies her and makes her feel she has achieved. So let her keep doing it. In any case, she is just a woman. The women emancipation must have got into her head. Women seem to forget that they talk too much but their action is zero, which is the exact opposite of men. For men, actions speak louder than words. In any case, the holy book is clear that women should not rule over men.

**Mr. Muimu:** That is all I wanted to tell you. What happened to the sponsors? I did not see them as expected. I thought they would walk around the compound and say hello to everyone.
Principal: I have never understood the reasoning of these people. It seems that they normally intend to get us unawares. Let them know that this will never happen. They do not know that I am a tough man. Imagine that they had initially called me and said they were arriving a few minutes to ten only for them to send a man who said they would come tomorrow morning. Can you imagine that?

Mr. Muimu: Maybe they felt fatigued and could not make it all the way from the airport to this place.

Principal: The notice they had given me in the morning was an impromptu one. Come to think of it. They did not even consider informing me when they booked their flight in Ohio. They simply waited until they had landed in our local airport. That is when Myles called and said (imitating the caller, a white American) Hey there Iscah. You doing well? We have just landed and will be in the school in about half an hour, a few minutes to ten. See you.

(The two of them laugh briefly.)

That was when I called you to inform the students to assemble at the gate. However, I had word from a friend in the USA that they were planning to come without informing me. This is because they had reports stating that I am corrupt and was running the school using underhand and dubious methods. I was therefore expecting them any time.

Mr. Muimu: I assure you that whoever is attempting to sabotage you will never succeed. I will personally spend sleepless nights to ensure that.

Principal: Imagine I was with the students at the gate waiting, only for this hopeless young man to come and announce that they will come tomorrow.

Mr. Muimu: I guess that works for our good because we will have ample time to prepare for them. If they had arrived at that time, they would have found us not ready.

Principal: That is the reason I called you here. We need to plan on what to do with the extra students, but before we get to that, there is a more pressing matter.
Mr. Muimu: What is that?

Principal: The pregnancy test results are out, they state that three of our girls are pregnant.

Mr. Muimu: (Absolutely taken aback) That is shocking news.

Principal: Precisely. We need to be very tactful and extremely cautious on how we handle this matter. Otherwise, it can ultimately bring our school down.

Mr. Muimu: Who are these girls?

Principal: Petty Kiindo in Form Three, Nempolos Ororei and Taby Shida in Form Four.

(Handing him the report) Here is the report from the nurse.

(Some silence as he reads the report.)

Mr. Muimu: (Shaking his head.) This is one of the most shocking reports in the history of this school.

Principal: Like you can see in that report, Taby Shida is three months pregnant, Petty Kiindo is two and Nempolos Ororei is five. By the time we release the students for the holiday, the physical changes in their bodies will be evident and if their parents are keen, they will notice the pregnancies.

Mr. Muimu: What is to be done?

Principal: Something needs to be done fast. As you know, Taby Shida is under my custody. She stays in my house. My wife will make a lot of noise when she realizes this. She is most likely to demand that I send her back to her parents in the village. She has never supported my idea of keeping the girl and educating her.

Mr. Muimu: Do the girls know? I mean have you informed them in person?

Principal: I have not yet. That is why I called you. How do I tell them? I am supposed to punish them or send them away to come with their parents for a thorough interrogation?

Mr. Muimu: The parents must be involved in this matter. The only challenge will be in the case of the girl you mentioned, the one under your custody.
Principal: You need to weigh all the options. You do not seem to realize that our school has five male teachers and only two female teachers. The parents have always complained about this state of affairs.

Mr. Muimu: Are you suggesting that we will be blamed for failing to give the relevant advice to the girls or... (Does not know what to make of the situation.)

Principal: You are too slow Muimu in grasping matters. Do you mean that you have never heard of cases where male teachers are implicated in situations like this? The parents could as well say that we are responsible for all these. The girls could also claim that we are responsible for their pregnancies. They could mention your name, or mine or any other teacher's name. You can never know what to expect from these students.

Mr. Muimu: In that case, let us call the girls one by one and talk to them. Hear what they have to say. They should tell us who the man behind their pregnancy is.

Principal: What if they say it is you. What will you do?

Mr. Muimu: (A bit shocked) They cannot say that. I mean we will not allow them to say that.

Principal: (Some excitement can be detected on his face.) That is why I like you Muimu. We always agree.

Mr. Muimu: I am sure that the girls cannot dare mention our names. What we need to determine is the way forward. If they stay in the school, it will ruin our reputation.

Principal: That is true. We can expel them. It is the only possible option we have.

Mr. Muimu: What reason will you give to the parents?

Principal: I cannot lack a reason. I will think of one. For now, let us take one-step at a time. Call the girls right now.

(Mr. Muimu stands up.)

No Muimu. Do not call all of them at once. Call one. (Thinking.) Do you think we can start with Nempolos Ororei?
Mr. Muimu: That is ok with me.

(Walks out. The principal scratches his head in deep thought. He is obviously disturbed by the state of affairs. He picks up the report and reads through it again and again.)

(Mr. Muimu knocks and comes in.)
She is outside. Can she come in now?

(The principal nods.)
(In a loud voice) Come in Ororei.

(Ororei walks in.)

Principal: Ororei, why do you think I have called you to my office?

Ororei: (Afraid and hesitating) I do not know.

Principal: (In a harsh and commanding voice) Nempolos Ororei, is that how you refer to your seniors?

Ororei: I do not know sir.

Principal: You ought to be respectful, otherwise you will land into big trouble.

(He is not sure how to proceed but still puts a face.)

I am carrying out a routine check on the students. Everything you say in this office should be nothing but the truth because if you lie, I will know and punish you severely. Is that clear?

Ororei: Yes sir.

Principal: The first question, do you have a boyfriend?

Ororei: (A bit shocked, looks at Mr. Muimu to see whether she can deduce where this is leading to.) No.

Principal: What do you mean no. Have you ever had a boyfriend?

Ororei: No.

(There is silence as the principal attempts to adapt a different approach.)

Principal: Ok Ororei. You are obviously aware that some pregnancy tests were carried out last week. Do you think that you are among the girls who tested pregnant?

Ororei: No.

(The principal is annoyed and stands up to slap Ororei, but quickly regains his calm and sits down.)
Principal: Ororei, are you aware that I have not called you here for fun? Mr. Muimu, do you have anything to say?

Mr. Muimu: (Mr. Muimu is calmer than the principal.)

Nempolos Ororei, are there any girls in the school that have boyfriends?

Ororei: I do not know.

Mr. Muimu: You do not have to mention names. We just want to know, and nothing you say in this office will be disclosed to anyone else.

Ororei: I do not know sir; I keep to myself most of the time. I am not the social kind.

Mr. Muimu: You do not have to be social in order to know this. You must have overheard once or twice the other students talking. Have you heard about anyone who has a boyfriend?

Ororei: I have not.

Principal: I will not allow you to waste our time Ororei. According to the report given here by the nurse, you are pregnant.

(He goes silent to see the expression on her face. Ororei is shocked but quickly recovers.)

How many months pregnant are you?

Ororei: I do not know unless you tell me.

(The principal cannot take this; he stands up and slaps her twice on the face.) What did you say?

Mr. Muimu: (Stands to restrain him.) Calm down sir. We will get to the root of this matter. Nempolos, what is the meaning of all that?

Principal: (Intercepting) Do you know that the rude answers you are giving and the situation you are in can cost you an expulsion from this school? I have helped your parents very much by convincing the sponsors to pay your school fees. Have you thought about what could happen to you if the sponsors got the report that you are pregnant?

(Silence)

Are there any girls who have relationships with teachers?

Ororei: I do not know.

Principal: (He is by now very annoyed. Shouting.)

Get out of my office at once or else...
(Ororei walks out of the office. The principal calls her before she gets to the door.)

I know that you girls are crazy. Now that you are pregnant and you are claiming you have no boyfriend, let me not hear anyone mention a teacher's name in connection to this case. I warn you of dire consequences if I hear any such nonsense. Now go.

Mr. Muimu: (Does not know what to make of the situation.)

These girls are up to no good. Is there a possibility that she was raped then?

Principal: I do not believe anything of what she said. She is just a liar who is trying to play with our minds.

Mr. Muimu: Do I call the other girls?

Principal: No. Forget about all that. I am not ready for any of that nonsense again. Don’t you realize that all these girls are the same?

Mr. Muimu: Ok. What next sir?

Principal: Do you think she would say that she had an affair with a teacher?

Mr. Muimu: I do not think so. She will be afraid to say such a thing. You do not need to worry about that.

Principal: I have already developed a headache. Leave the issue of the girls for now.

Mr. Muimu: Before we do that, you can consider involving Miss Haja in future interrogations. She is very much close to the girls. May be they might be more sincere in her presence.

Principal: I will think about that. Anyway, the sponsors are here. Their demands are out of this world. We have to keep thirty students in each class. These will be the sponsored ones only.

Mr. Muimu: What happens to the rest of them? That will be about ten students in each class.

Principal: That’s why I called you here. You have to think of a good plan.

Mr. Muimu: This seems difficult; must it be done sir? Why do we have to keep the ten extra students in the first place?

Principal: (Showing sheer annoyance.) You are not here to question my decrees, you are here to carry them out, get me?
Mr. Muimu: I am sorry sir, I did not mean to disagree with your decision.

Principal: (Almost shouting) There is no time to be sorry. They will be back tomorrow morning. We are very lucky that they did not come today as they had said. I do not know what I would have done.

(Calming down) I want you to walk them to the Arboretum Park the first thing in the morning. They will stay there the whole day.

Mr. Muimu: I’d rather they visit the museum. At least no one will realize that they are idle or merely wasting time in a park.

Principal: You very well know that visiting the museum will cost us money. Where will it come from?

Mr. Muimu: I know it is possible for you to pay the required money from the school finances. You seem to overlook the danger that the parents might see the girls idling in the park it being a weekday. It would be more sensible if it were over the weekend. Please consider this matter more elaborately.

Principal: I understand that last bit, but I cannot afford to pay all that money for all the girls.

Mr. Muimu: You need to consider the option of taking the girls to the museum because it will not raise eyebrows. You can tell the girls that you have decided to take them for a trip. Then explain to them that since the sponsors are in the school, you will take them in groups: the others will have their own two weeks or a month from now.

Principal: You are as sure as I am that that will not happen, Muimu.

Mr. Muimu: Either way, that is better than your proposition. You cannot trust these girls, the ones who remain might blurb out word to the sponsors. It is reasonable when you assure them that this is a normal school trip, they will have no reason to be suspicious.

Principal: I tell you I will not pay all that money. Suit yourself and thank you for the good ideas, but they cannot work for me. You will still have to take the girls to the park tomorrow.

Mr. Muimu: Consider that you can include the money in the next term’s school fees. That will work out all right. You will state that it was an educational trip. The parents trust your word and seem to worship you sir.
Principal: You are finally making sense, I think that will be exactly it. That is why I keep saying that you are a reliable man. You analyze every detail.

Mr. Muimu: But sir I have one final issue. Must I be the one who will go with the girls? Why not another teacher, maybe Mr. Kasuku. I...

Principal: I have my own reasons. I cannot trust these other teachers with the girls. You are the only one who can do this because you are more mature than the rest.

Mr. Muimu: Miss Haja can do this, in any case, she is a female teacher, and the ministry rules say that female students should not go out without the company of a female teacher. The girls will also feel comfortable with her. They adore her.

Principal: That is the more reason I do not want her to take them. She is too close with the girls. She might incite them against me. There is a possibility she might tell them the truth. This is why I am saying you and not anyone else will go.

Mr. Muimu: (Dejected) Does this mean that I will not get the opportunity of meeting the sponsors? I thought you will entrust me with the opportunity of accompanying you to welcome them and show them around the school. This sounds like a demotion to me. I might miss some goodies that they might give to the other teachers.

Principal: (Agitated.) What goodies? I refuse to be carried away by your whims. My word is final. I...

(There is a knock on the door.)

Come right in. (Enters Miss Haja.) Yes Miss Haja how are you?

Miss Haja: I am fine sir. How are you? Hello Mr. Muimu.

Mr. Muimu: Hello.

Miss Haja: Am I interrupting?

(To the principal) I can come afterwards.

Principal: Not at all. In fact, I was just about to send for you. Like I have just told, Mr. Muimu, the pregnancy test results are out, they state that three of our girls are pregnant. We need to deliberate on what to do. Kindly have a seat.
Miss Haja: Three! Oh my! What is happening? We are losing our girls. Who are these if I may know?

Principal: (Hands the report over to her) Here, Have a look at the nurse's report.

(Brief silence as she reads the report.)

Miss Haja: This is unbelievable!

(Raising her eyes from the report.) So what now?

Principal: We want to get a way forward. We do not know the next step. What do you make of the situation?

Miss Haja: It has got me off guard, but then come to think of it, the fault is particularly ours. We do not have enough counselling sessions in the school. This might be a major contributing factor. Not to mention the seemingly lack of role models.

Principal: Yes. (Hesitating) That can be partly it, but you should also bear in mind that teenagers do not seem to consider anyone's advice. If you tell them something, they do the exact opposite. So why bother telling them at all in the first place?

Miss Haja: They need to hear it again and again, and even have mentors and role models who they look up to. This is very crucial for them.

Mr. Muimu: Are you saying that we have failed in that?

Miss Haja: The sooner we accept our state of affairs and admit our mistakes the better for this school Mr. Muimu.

Principal: Look here Miss Haja, the milk has already been spilt as they say. As we speak now, a girl is already pregnant, so what next?

Miss Haja: Let the girl have a counselling session one on one with a professional counsellor. Let the counsellor determine her state. Then these sessions can go on depending on the report of the counsellor gives.

Principal: Slow down a little bit, because I think you are jumping ahead of things. This is a learning institution that should uphold the best of moral standards. It is based on christian morals. I am a God-fearing man myself. What kind of a picture will we paint by doing that? That we support sex for high school girls? Is that what you mean?
Mr. Muimu: You also need to consider, Miss Haja, that the other girls might get the wrong message, that they are allowed to go ahead and get pregnant, then receive the same tender treatment like these ones?

Miss Haja: The two of you are parents. You need to ask yourselves this critical question, what if this was your daughter, flesh and blood. Mr. Muimu, Mr. Iscariot?

Principal: (Playing safe.) I would withdraw her from the school until she delivers, then send her to another school.

Mr. Muimu: (Elusive.) Sure. Sure. I would do the same.

Miss Haja: Do not ever think that these girls are excited to carry those pregnancies. They are also extremely petrified and traumatized. Any harsh treatment would even cause them to feel rejected, miscarry, attempt an abortion or worse still, commit suicide.

Principal: Yes. That is all true but as things stand now, we have no time for pity parties. These girls will have to be suspended at some point.

Miss Haja: What! Are you that merciless?

Principal: We have a reputation to keep as a school! Otherwise, I will not have any students enrolling in this school next year.

Miss Haja: You are aware of the laws of the Ministry of Education concerning such cases. It is criminal to expel students out of school for reason of their being pregnant.

Principal: I will not expel them for that reason, I will look for another.

Miss Haja: Then I am not part of this decision. Count me out.

Mr. Muimu: Maybe before the final decision is made, Miss Haja you would consider helping us out, you are close to the girls so you know them well, do they have boyfriends?

Miss Haja: They obviously do. This is quite evident from the evidence we have now. Unless, (hesitating) there are possibilities of rape, but that would have been reported a long time ago. The other worse possibility is that of an older man taking advantage of their innocence.

Principal: Do not defend them too much Miss Haja, this is a case of willing buyer and willing seller. I know they are not that innocent.
Miss Haja: You also seem to be too harsh on them, tone down a little bit and look at things from their perspective, feel what they feel.

Mr. Muimu: Miss Haja is right. I think the best thing is for Miss Haja to talk to one of the girls and see whether she can get any information on the kind of relationships these girls keep. From that point, we can know how to deal with the situation.

Principal: That’s all right with me. In fact, we do not have much time; we can do it right away. Miss Haja, are you ok if we do the questioning now? (Looks at Miss Haja questioningly.)

Miss Haja: That is possible, but I am not sure if the girls will be willing to disclose any such information in this set up. You know very well that they would be tense in your presence.

Principal: Let us just try to see if it works. If it fails, there is no harm; we will have done our best. Which student will be best to interrogate Miss Haja? You seem to know them well. Muimu will call her right away.

Miss Haja: Call the class prefect Form Four, Nanjala.

(Mr. Muimu walks out.)

I had come to discuss a personal issue. I needed to get an appointment with you.

Principal: What is it?

Miss Haja: From the look of things, it is not time for it now. It will have to wait until you are done with the matter at hand.

Principal: You can come at three o’clock I can create time then.

Miss Haja: That is ok with me. Thank you.

Principal: I have always wanted this school to have an excellent performance in this region. I know that with the help of teachers like you, we can do very well.

Miss Haja: Sure. I try my level best.

(Silence. Mr. Muimu walks in.)

Mr. Muimu: (As he sits) Come in Nanjala

(Nanjala walks in and stands close to the door.)

Principal: How are you Nanjala?

Nanjala: I am fine sir.
**Principal:** There is some information we would like to get from you. I want to assure you that nothing you say in this office will be taken against you neither will we punish you or harass you for what you say. We will also not force you to say anything you do not want to say. So you should feel free to tell us what we want and do not fear that the other students will know. Is that right Nanjala?

**Nanjala:** Yes sir.

**Principal:** Well said, we can proceed. *(Looking at Miss Haja)* Miss Haja?

**Miss Haja:** We have called you because we trust that you are a sincere and a reliable girl. Whatever you tell us will be used to help us make right decisions on how to help the rest of the girls and to manage the school effectively. Nanjala, in your estimation, what percentage of the whole population of the girls has boyfriends.

**Nanjala:** Probably thirty percent.

**Miss Haja:** Are those girls proud about it? Do the other girls envy them?

**Nanjala:** Some do, especially when some girls brag that they get their pocket money from their boyfriends.

**Mr. Muimu:** Do some girls know that they are pregnant?

**Nanjala:** I sincerely do not know sir, but one thing I know is that some girls use contraceptives. This way, they are confident that they can never get pregnant. I once overheard a Form Four student advice a Form Three student on how to use them.

**Principal:** When was that?

**Nanjala:** I can’t remember exactly, but it was last term.

**Mr. Muimu:** Nanjala, do you know the girls’ reaction in relation to the recently released results?

**Nanjala:** The girls are very secretive. It is worse with me because they fear that I might tell the administration or the teachers. There has been talk about it but in hushed tones.

**Miss Haja:** *(Looking at the principal)* I guess that is all. *(Turning to Nanjala)* or is there anything else you feel would be of importance to us? You know that you are our eyes and ears in the student body.
Nanjala: Not really, but I think it is important for you to know that there are some students who boast about having relationships with teachers. They claim that these teachers love them and give them money.

Principal: (Standing) What! You mean... (Drawing close to her threateningly.) Who are those, you have to tell me!
(Nanjala is shocked and moves backwards. Mr. Muimu moves fast to restrain the principal.)
She has to mention the girls. We need to know. It is not right for the girls to accuse teachers. This might lead us to trouble with the parents. Nanjala, which girls are these?

Miss Haja: It might not be an accusation sir. Maybe it is true.

Principal: Then let her mention names. (Moves closer Nanjala.) Nanjala, who are these?

Nanjala: (Fearful) I have heard Ororei say something like that.

Principal: (Still agitated) Which teachers?

Nanjala: (Looks at Miss Haja pleading for help) I cannot mention the names.

Principal: (Holds her and shakes her vigorously) You must say who those teachers.

Miss Haja: Remember sir we promised that we would not force her to say anything.
(The principal is still holding Nanjala. Mr. Muimu moves to plead with the principal to let the girl go.)

Mr. Muimu: Please, we will see how to sort this out sir.
(The principal lets her go. He slowly returns to his seat.)

Nanjala: Can I go now?

Miss Haja: Yes. Thank you for the information. Go back to class.
(Silence)
This issue will need to be handled very soberly. I suggest that you think about it sir.

Mr. Muimu: I also agree. You will have to think about how to handle the pregnant girls and what to tell the rest of them.
Principal: (Harshly) I need to think, but these girls cannot remain in my compound. Please leave my office.

(Miss Haja and Mr. Muimu look at each other briefly. Miss Haja walks out first then Mr. Muimu follows. The principal is holding his face with his two hands.)

(There is a knock on the door after a short while.)

Who is there? Come in.

(Mercy walks in.)

Principal: I called for you a long time ago. Where have you been?

Mercy: I have just been informed now.

Principal: I have called you for a very important matter. I want you to be very sincere with what you tell me. The information you will give me will be of great importance to you. Do you understand?

Mercy: Yes sir.

Principal: Fine. Remind me briefly about your parents. Did you say that your father works for the juakali industry?

Mercy: Yes.

Principal: Where is he stationed?

Mercy: He works with a group of artisans that are based at the Deep Sea slums.

Principal: What about your mother?

Mercy: She owns a kiosk near our house, which is in the same slum.

Principal: I would want to help you. I know that your parents are straining to pay your school fees. The sponsors will be in the school today and they are ready to sponsor two more students. You can be one of them. Would you like that?

Mercy: Yes.

Principal: There are however, a few requirements you need to meet. When I forward your name to the sponsors, they will call you for a brief interview. They will ask you whether both your parents are alive. Tell them that your father died before you joined this school and that your mother does manual jobs and can barely pay your school fees. Tell them that your school fees for this term has not been paid.
Mercy: But...
Principal: You have to agree with what I am telling you if you want to get the sponsorship.
Mercy: Must I tell them that my father is dead? I do not wish to say that.
Principal: You must if you want to get the sponsorship. Don’t be too difficult. The sponsors only sponsor girls who are orphans. There is no harm in saying that your father is dead. He will be happy if you alleviate the burden of paying school fees. Do you understand?
Mercy: (Hesitant.) Yes.
Principal: Do not doubt me. I want the best for you. Remember to tell the sponsors that you do not have the death certificate but that the principal can arrange to get it for you through the local chief. Is this clear?
Mercy: Yes sir.
Principal: Go back to class.
(Mercy walks out albeit downcast.)
ACT 3

In the principal’s office. Some books are scattered on the table. There is dust on the table, the visitor’s chair and the bench. The principal is seated on his chair and is busy on the phone.

Principal: Yes my friend. You have to look for ways to make them know that you are in charge... yes.... That is true my friend....Do not worry, they will forget it very soon. (Silence.) Oh yes,... I am a man of God...
(There is a knock on the door.) Come in.
(Miss Haja enters. She has a brown envelope in her hand. He gestures to her to sit on the visitor’s. She wipes the seat and sits.)

Principal: (Still on phone.) I can talk to you later, I should be working now.... You should not eat if you don’t work. (Pause then laughter.) Oh yes, I'll always have my way. Sure.
(Turning to Miss Haja.)
Oh, sorry Miss Haja. I am a busy man. Anyway, how can I help you?

Miss Haja: Good afternoon sir. I am sorry for interrupting your busy schedule, but I wanted to talk to you. You had earlier on told me to come at three o’clock.

Principal: Oh yes, I remember now. (Looks at the books that are scattered on his table.) I hope you do not mind this disorganization. My mind is not as the table appears.

Miss Haja: I am ok.

Principal: The dust in this place is sickening. I had just sent for someone to come and clean this place over lunchtime but he has not shown up.
(He pushes some of the books to one side of the table so that there is a little bit of space close to where he is seated. Dusting his hands with a piece of an old napkin.)
What is it?

Miss Haja: I have come to discuss a matter that has bothered me for some time now. I have also come to present the poem that has emerged as the best so that you can read it before it is presented to any of your guests. I
have told the two girls who are presenting it to come to your office during
the free lesson that is twenty minutes from now.

**Principal**: That is perfect. In that case we will start with the personal matter
first. What is it?

**Miss Haja**: You know that I have served you in this school for four years now.

**Principal**: *(Cuts her short.)* Sure. Sure. I have never had any problem with
you. You have so far portrayed the skills of a faithful servant.

**Miss Haja**: My conscience cannot allow me anymore.

**Principal**: *(Interrupting in surprise.)*

Your conscience? You mean there is something disturbing you?

**Miss Haja**: I have come to hand in my resignation letter.

**Principal**: Resignation letter! Why? Is there a problem or does it mean you
have located some greener pastures?

**Miss Haja**: I find our mode of doing things never straight forward. Young
people are very keen with what happens around them and unfortunately,
they are very quick to learn by example. They have already started
learning that our ways are dubious and that is what they will copy. This
is a seed and by the end of it all, we will have corrupted a whole
generation.

**Principal**: What is it specifically that you are terming as dubious? I am still
lost.

**Miss Haja**: Take for instance this pregnancy issue. Have you stopped to think
all about it? If you remember very well, last term we had similar
complaints as the ones you heard Nanjala talk about earlier on in the
day. These are the complaints that some girls have relationships with
male teachers in the school.

**Principal**: I remember very well that an anonymous Form Three girl dropped
a note in my office that stated that I should do something to stop the love
relationships between some teachers and the girls. There is one thing
you have to note madam. Students are always mischievous and out to
create commotion where necessary. I have enough experience to tell you
that. The first action that an administrator takes is not to behave like a
chicken whose head has just been chopped off by acting upon student's
information. The first rule I learnt in my job is that I should never take students' words as the gospel truth. Do you understand?

Miss Haja: I agree with your rule that students' information should not be taken as the gospel truth, but have you also considered that there might be some aspects of truth in it? In any case, if what the student said in the note were mere fabrications, then I think she should have been brought to book and punished for the mischief.

Principal: Rule number two: Never argue with a fool. This is a biblical principle. If you give attention to a fool, she will think that she is very important. Teenagers are attention seekers. The girl who wrote the note probably just wanted to be noted by her fellow students that she is brave enough to drop a note in the principal’s office without being caught. This way, she will be a hero and receive praises from them. She could be jealous of one or two girls and use this as a way to tarnish their reputation. She might be seeking a leadership position as a prefect in the school thus use this as a means of showing me that she is responsible enough to report such cases. I am not subject to such monkey tricks.

Miss Haja: All what you are saying is true. All the same, you should have found whether the note was true or only a bunch of lies.

Principal: Do you know why the Son of Man ignored Pilate’s question? It will take you a number of years before you understand my line of thought. You are young in this profession and that is why you have so much energy to straighten everything that looks crooked. You will soon realize that you have exhausted all the energy you had without any achievement. You have heard me many times say, let the sleeping dogs lie because they are so tired from the night’s duties that they need to re-energize themselves for the next night in order to protect you.

Miss Haja: Allow me to ask you a question sir. What will you do if you find out that one of your teachers is responsible for one of the girl’s pregnancy?

Principal: I am shocked that you believe what these girls say. Anyway, I will not allow such to happen. I am slow but sure.

Miss Haja: What do you mean?
**Principal:** I mean that all the girls in The Light on the Hill Academy still have a long way ahead of them. They can start life all over again if they are forced by circumstances to do so, but if I allow my teachers to be at the mercy of the girls, then I will have destroyed a family’s source of livelihood. My teachers already have people who depend on them and they do not have time to start a new life.

**Miss Haja:** I cannot believe that is coming from you.

**Principal:** Miss Haja, I have always had the love of God in my heart for you. That is why I tolerate you and listen to your interesting arguments. I have received a lot of complaints and opposition from you. You are such a resolute person. If it were another teacher, I would have sacked him or her a long time ago.

**Miss Haja:** That contradicts what you had just said earlier about fighting for your teachers.

**Principal:** It should be clear to you that I do not allow teachers to come and dictate to me what I should or not do. If it were another, I would have thrown him or her out of my office a long time ago.

*(Lowering his voice)*

That is why you should allow us to be friends.

**Miss Haja:** *(Ignoring his suggestion.)* It is very alarming that some girls use birth control pills. This means that we have a generation of girls who cannot exercise control over their sexual emotions. As it is said, a person without self-control is like a city without a wall. The situation could also possibly mean that they are in danger of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

**Principal:** Miss Haja, I am not as passive and ignorant as you think in running the affairs of my school. This matter equally agitates me. I had arranged with Hatua Counselling Centre to come and test the girls at lunchtime, then on second thought, I postponed it to tomorrow evening. This is because the sponsors called and said they were coming today and I did not want to have such testing going on while they were around. It might send a wrong picture to them.
Miss Haja: That is a good step.
Principal: You should stop pushing me so much. If you were the principal, you would know that it is not an easy thing to run a school. Have you also forgotten that the pregnancy tests were carried out? If it were not for that, you would not be here blaming me for this pregnancy issue.
Miss Haja: It was a directive from the Ministry of Education.
Principal: If I wanted, I would not have allowed it. I had the alternative of fabricating the results. I know of principals who have done that.
Miss Haja: That was a good thing to do sir.
(A knock on the door.)
Principal: Come in.
(Nanjala and Nalangu come in.)
Miss Haja: These are the girls who are presenting the poem. They are ready to recite it before you so that you can assess it.
(To the students) Are you ready?
Nanjala and Nalangu: Yes.
Principal: Go right ahead.
(Nanjala and Nalangu signal each other as a signal to start.)
Nanjala and Nalangu: This is Claude Mc Kay’s poem entitled:

If We Must Die
If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die, O let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honour us though dead!
O kinsmen we must meet the common foe!
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!
Thank you.

**Principal:** Excellent! That is a very good recitation! Well done Nanjala and Nalangu. You will present it to the sponsors tomorrow. You can go back to class.

(The students walk out. Silence.)
I guess that is all Miss Haja.

**Miss Haja:** There is something else sir, I think it is my duty as a teacher to inform you about any alarming issue in the school before it blows out of proportion.

**Principal:** That should be so. You are my eyes that watch students in the classroom.

(He stands up and walks to where she is seated. He teasingly touches her cheeks.) What is this alarming issue my dear?

**Miss Haja:** (Violently shoves his hand away. Looks at him sternly) You are the principal of this school and you should behave like one if you expect me to respect you!

**Principal:** (Touching her left shoulder.) Come on sweetheart. Don’t be so hard on me.

**Miss Haja:** (Stands up. In a voice of annoyance.) Look here, if you have any sense in your head, (pointing towards his chair) then sit on your chair. What would someone think if he or she found you standing near me? Take for instance a student?

**Principal:** (Moving to his chair.) They would know that I love you.

**Miss Haja:** I do not need an inch of your love! Take it to your wife back at home.

(Still annoyed) Do you ever stop and realize that you are a married man?

**Principal:** (Sits) Men are generous by nature. I am also a man of God who is mandated to take care of the Lord’s flock.

**Miss Haja:** As if that is not enough, you are a pastor. You should be ashamed of yourself that you do not lead by example. Preaching water and drinking wine.
Principal: Drinking non-alcoholic wine, the kind that does not make one drunk. The good book states that it is good for the stomach.

Miss Haja: Unbelievable! Are you serious? Your conscience is dead. God should strike you dead! I am surprised that he still lets you stand before his people to speak to them. Your church should be banned.

Principal: He is a merciful God. You know that.

Miss Haja: You are ridiculous!

Principal: Can we meet today at six in the evening?

Miss Haja: (Ignoring his comment.) I was raising a serious issue before you rudely interrupted me.

Principal: We do not have to sit in this dusty office and breathe in all the dust. We can talk about it that time.

Miss Haja: Those are not working hours. What I have to say concerns the school. It is an official matter. It is not a personal issue.

Principal: That is the more reason I should buy some wine for you as a reward.

Miss Haja: (Ignoring his line of talk.) Does it ever bother you that the girls are disturbed by the state of affairs in this school?

Principal: (Uninterested.) Then they should look for another school that will suit them.

Miss Haja: (Changing tact.) Are you aware that the girls can decide to bring down your school in a day?

Principal: (Alarmed) Why?

Miss Haja: There have been numerous complaints from the girls that they are concerned about the many interruptions during learning hours.

Principal: Are you inciting them? How come I have not heard the complaints from anyone else?

Miss Haja: Listen sir, I was in class this morning and some girls reported that they need their learning time to be uninterrupted.

Principal: Did they tell you so that you can report it to me or they were just complaining?

Miss Haja: Either way sir, the message is the same.
Principal: You are too naïve madam. If they reported it to you, then it means that you have become the principal of The Light on the Hill Academy. (Feigned respect.) Go ahead and sort out the issue madam principal.

Miss Haja: They requested me to tell you that they would have more time to focus on their academics if their lessons were not interrupted.

Principal: I see. You are the messenger! The middle person linking the girls and the school principal. What a noble job! Go and tell them that they should stop their bickering and settle down to study. Complaining is what caused the children of Israel to stay in the wilderness for forty years instead of forty days.

Miss Haja: But...

Principal: (Loudly) End of story! If you only did your work, which is teaching! I am very aware of the fact that if the students fail in their examination it is my reputation that will be tarnished. If you need a favour from me, go straight to the point. Don’t threaten me with a resignation letter!

Miss Haja: It is discouraging enough that the girls have learnt that you are not committed to supporting teachers. They have even become very reluctant in their participation in class. They are therefore not shaken by a mere teacher’s punishment. I have noted that they are becoming more unruly by the day. They seem to know that you do not respect the teachers and have followed your example. This can make the teachers to lose commitment in their work.

Principal: I will see what I can do. As for you, do your work.

Miss Haja: As I leave, it is my duty to tell you the reasons that made me resign. You should also consider that telling the lie that some student’s parents are dead for them to get sponsorship is a grave affair. This is like a brooding place for vipers. I say this because if we continue teaching lies; we will produce a generation that will turn out to be very inhumane. Do we expect them to be honest in future? Do we expect that a miracle will happen? This country is already corrupt. We should train young people to practise integrity.

Principal: I thought that’s your work Miss Haja. I pay you for it! You are employed here at the The Light on the Hill Academy not only to teach
English, Literature, C.R.E., but also teach morals at the same time. Integrate it during your Literature lessons. I thought that was also part of your work.

**Miss Haja:** (Confused about the principal’s reaction.) I do not mean that. I already...

**Principal:** (Cuts her short) I hope you didn’t come to my office to waste my time! Simple, tell the students not to lie! I thought you are a trained teacher.

**Miss Haja:** I beg your indulgence sir, but you see, we teach the girls all these things in class: honesty, faithfulness, loyalty, hard work and all, but we do not practise what we teach. It is like preaching water and drinking wine.

**Principal:** Let me be patient with you madam, not because I want to, but because I have realized you need a refresher course from me. (Pause) You have put it rightly, if I heard you right, that you teach faithfulness, honesty, loyalty, hard work and the rest of them. You do well. Go on teaching. Preaching water and drinking wine is a matter of age. A teacher is allowed to drink wine, a student is not. Tell the girls to do the right thing. They should not think that they are allowed to do some things because the teacher does them. It should be clear that not everything we do and say is permissible for them. Is that clear?

**Miss Haja:** You are my employer but I disagree with you right there sir, with all due respect. These girls are growing up and as it is, they are learning. The simplest form of learning is by example. We are obviously the only role models they see every day. If we do the wrong things, how do we expect them to learn the right behaviour?

**Principal:** Miss Haja, are you accusing me of doing the wrong thing? Have you come to my office to teach me how I should work?

**Miss Haja:** I do not mean that sir. I just think that something needs to be done. We can stop lying to the sponsors that some of our girls are orphans. Sir, I think you need to set the records straight.

**Principal:** Let me warn you young girl, you are treading on dangerous grounds. How does that concern you? Do you know how many girls I
have helped through this program? These girls come from the neighbouring slum and the rest from impoverished upcountry families. The parents are very poor. As poor as poverty itself. They cannot afford to pay for their girls’ education. That means it is as well as if the girls were orphans. What I am offering them is by far the best of what they would have dreamt about in their wildest dreams.

**Miss Haja:** To the extent of helping them I understand, but when it comes to your declaration that the poverty of their parents can as well be equated to them being orphans, that is another matter all together.

**Principal:** You are entitled to think what you want. As far as I am concerned, my reward will be in heaven. I am used to the judgmental thinking of Africans. If I had not told these white men that our girls are orphans and need help, do you think this school would be here? Where would the girls be? I have fetched some of them from very remote villages in this country. Would you rather they stay in those villages and die as backward as they were born? Miss Haja; think before you judge. Thou shall not judge lest you shall also be judged. If it were not for my initiative, you would not be having this job now.

**Miss Haja:** I agree that what you are doing is right, but the way you are doing it is wrong. As a pastor and a leader, you surely can tell the sponsors the truth. They can sponsor the children either way, whether they are orphans or not.

**Principal:** I will not allow you to sit in my office and dictate to me how I should do things. *(Shouting)* Please walk out before I throw you out of my office.

**Miss Haja:** I am sorry sir. Here is my resignation letter. *(Hands over the brown envelope to the principal.)*

**Principal:** *(Ignoring the envelope.)* We are mature people Miss Haja, we need to talk. This is like giving a permanent solution to a temporary situation. You cannot just resign because you are annoyed. Go and think over this decision then we can talk about it later.

**Miss Haja:** I have already thought about it. This is my final decision.
**Principal:** You need to consider that I am considering giving the teachers a salary increment. You do not want to leave at such a time.

**Miss Haja:** (Puts the envelope on the table.) That would be a commendable thing; however, it was not in my agenda therefore it will not change my mind.

**Principal:** If you have found another well-paying job, just tell me and I will release you out of a sincere heart. If it is a salary increment you want, you’d have said that a long time ago.

**Miss Haja:** You misunderstand me sir, I mean, life is not only about money. Look at the state our girls are in. This simply shows that we have failed in our duty to teach them morals. My concern is what we are training these girls to be. I do not want to be a contributing factor to the problem. It would have been reasonable if it was one girl, but three! In addition to this is your reluctance to solve the matter. I am utterly ashamed to be part of such a situation.

**Principal:** (Interrupting) I will increase your salary right away Miss Haja. We can come up with an agreement. Let us not waste time.

**Miss Haja:** I have washed my hands off this matter.

**Principal:** Look here Miss Haja, I am in the process of choosing and appointing a deputy for the school. One of the ministry’s requirements is that a girls’ school should have a female deputy or principal. From my assessment and your concern for the girls, you fit very well for this position. I did not want to preempt this information because I was to inform the sponsors first when they come tomorrow. Then I would have told you later as a pleasant surprise after I send your name to the Teachers Service Commission for affirmation. This is not meant to blackmail you.

**Miss Haja:** We seem to be talking about two different issues. How does my being the deputy change the morality of the girls? You know very well that the solution does not lie in making Miss Haja or any other female teacher the deputy. It has to do with your willingness as the principal of the school to help the girls. We ought to be concerned about what we are making out of these young ones not our own selfish interests.
Principal: Patience is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Calm down and look at things with a level head. God will pay you at the end. Look at it this way; I need somebody to talk to the girls concerning their situation. Who will if you leave the school?

Miss Haja: You do not provide a favourable environment for the teachers to do it. What guarantee is there that things will change if I became the deputy?

Principal: Fine Miss Haja. You can help me deal with the situation. What do you think we are supposed to do? I am also distressed about this matter.

Miss Haja: I have already given you my suggestions.

(The principal stands up and walks round the table to stand near Miss Haja. Holds her shoulder. Miss Haja moves slightly to elude the touch.)

Principal: (Lowering his voice) Look here darling, we can handle this issue amicably. You are such a beautiful girl. I will pay you a higher salary and anything else you ask for, but leave these girls alone. They will grow up either way. Tell me sweetheart, who advised you when you were in school? I bet you just taught yourself how to behave well and work hard. That is because life was not easy and you had to work hard because the future looked bleak. Now compare yourself with these town girls. They call themselves the touch-screen generation. They were spoilt when they were in their mother’s wombs before they even gave their first yell. The society around them is already contaminated with immorality. Now tell me dear, how can we rectify such almost inborn traits?

Miss Haja: (Pushing his hand away. Loud) What! I can’t believe my ears. You mean you do not care about the welfare of the girls to such extent?

Principal: (Moves a little far from her.) Look here madam, you are still young. You need to learn a little bit from old experts like me. I was also very passionate when I started working, but I came to learn with time that life is not always fair. You have to learn ways that will help you live. Otherwise, you will perish with your moral sermons, and die a very poor and miserable person. This is a principle that has helped me through and through and I know it will help you too: Miss Haja, learn how to give up in some battles.
Miss Haja: I thought you are man of God; you preach water and drink wine?

Principal: I told you clearly, wine can be drunk by adults but not children. That is how we do it. Stop being too strict with issues. Just know what you should do for your benefit and forget about the rest. As for the students, you just need to reprimand them. That is all.

Miss Haja: I cannot allow...

Principal: (Moves close to her and holds her palm.) Let me tell you something, children are unpredictable. You will know that when you get your own. The ones you commit yourself to training so diligently turn out to be thieves, liars and failures in life, yet you know as I do that there are some children who are brought up by promiscuous mothers. Some of these mothers work in brothels and are renowned prostitutes. This is the first environment that their children grow up in, but nonetheless they turn out to be very moral, responsible and successful people in life.

Miss Haja: (Obviously annoyed.) So that is to say that we have no role whatsoever to play in guiding and modelling the girls that are in our custody in this school? That is what you mean?

Principal: I do not mean that. Just that we need to practise some moderation in how we carry out things. You do not need to be that radical and resolute in your decisions. All I am asking is that you cool down a little bit. I understand your enthusiasm because I once had it, but it never helps to fight your seniors. The right thing is to support them, then when your time comes, you will do what you want.

Miss Haja: I now understand you. (Standing up.)

Principal: (Holding her to her chair) Listen first, I will release you in a moment. Have you at any one time stopped to look and think about street children? It amazing how they grow up on their own. You need to learn whether modelled or not, children will either way grow up. God always helps them.

Miss Haja: (To herself) This is ridiculous! (Looks at the principal in surprise) Do you believe a word of all that you are saying? If you do, then your thinking is extremely perverted.
**Principal:** I am a pastor so you have no reason to doubt me. It is the work of people like me to counsel these girls on Sundays during the sermons we give. If you learn to do your work, that is to teach, you will not be worried about other people’s responsibilities. Do like some of the other teachers. I have never heard some complain about anything in this school.

**Miss Haja:** I have had enough of all these.

**Principal:** (Moves to hold her hands.) I have always loved you. We can make a deal honey, what about meeting at The Milima Hotel tomorrow evening for a cup of coffee. It will help you. It will only take you a matter of time then you will overcome your guilty conscience.

(Miss Haja looks at him with an unbelievable stare.)

I promise you that you will like it. You need to stop disturbing your head over these trivial issues. Leave them to me; otherwise, you will get your beautiful face age so fast.

(Moves his hand to touch her face.)

(She violently pushes his hand away.)

**Miss Haja:** Try this nonsense with someone else. Is this why you cannot address the girl’s accusation that some male teachers have affairs with some of the girls? I guess this what you do to them.

**Principal:** (Harshly) I will not allow you to abuse me. Let it be clear that I am your employer. I have offered my part of the bargain, go and think about it.

**Miss Haja:** (Picks the envelope and gives it to him.) I have put it in this letter that I will work up to Friday next week. There is nothing to think about.

**Principal:** (Calming down. Pointing at the bookshelf.) Place the envelope on that shelf. Go think about the matter we then can discuss it later. I’m sure you will change your mind.

**Miss Haja:** That is my final word. I will work only up to Friday next week. You do not have to pay me for it.

**Principal:** (Walks to his seat.) I’m sure you’ll change your mind.

**Miss Haja:** (Walks out without a word.)
ACT 4

Scene 1

It is 5 pm after the day lessons and the students have settled in their respective classes for personal studies. The weather is cold and it is a little dark due to the Nimbus clouds that have covered the evening sky. A student runs on the pathway between the Form Three and Form Four classes to catch up with Miss Haja who is headed to the staffroom. She is carrying two books in one hand and a piece of chalk in the other.

Taby: (Slightly panting) Excuse me Miss Haja?

Miss Haja: (Turning to see who it is) Yes Taby. What is it?

Taby: Can you spare me a few minutes? I would like to talk to you.

Miss Haja: That is ok. Go ahead.

Taby: Mmm...

Miss Haja: Why are you hesitant?

Taby: Yes Madam. It is confidential and I request that we need to be in a place where there will be no interruption. I do not also want anyone to know that I spoke to you.

Miss Haja: Ok, then. Follow me into the staffroom.

(Walks into the staffroom. Mr. Kasuku is seated on one of the chairs reading a newspaper. Taby walks in and then walks out on realizing that Mr. Kasuku is in the staffroom.)

Good evening to you sir. You mean you are still around? I thought you had left a long time ago. I saw you walking towards the gate when I was in the Form Three class.

Mr. Kasuku: (Placing the newspaper on the table) I am here as you can see. I want to know what happens around when everyone else leaves the school. “After Four Thirty” as David Maillu would put it.

Miss Haja: (Places her books on the table, and then moves to put the piece of chalk in a chalk box on the shelf. Pulls a chair and sits.) I have never read that book. Have you succeeded in making any discovery?
Mr. Kasuku: Nothing much. Just that you go back to class and teach when the girls are supposed to be having their own personal studies and do assignments. Now I understand why some of them never finish the assignments that I give them.

Miss Haja: I hope that does not offend you. I went back to class so that I would fulfill a request made by the girls that I should go and talk to them.

Mr. Kasuku: On what?

Miss Haja: Girls’ concerns. I was having a guidance and counselling session with them.

Mr. Kasuku: Is that supposed to be an official task delegated to you by the old man? Some extra cash at the end of the month?

Miss Haja: You know him as much as I do. I doubt whether he would be any excited if he realized that I was giving a talk to the girls. On the contrary, he might even ban any other such sessions.

Mr. Kasuku: Go on and do the extra work. I wish you all the best. As for me and my body, we will serve ourselves.

Miss Haja: You should have opted to go back to the Form Four class and helped them to understand a topic or two.

Mr. Kasuku: If the school does not appreciate the little I do, why should I do the extra mile? Forget it! You know very well that I don’t teach extra lessons.

Miss Haja: You don’t seem to be in a good mood, what happened to you? I thought you were fine throughout the day. What is it?

Mr. Kasuku: Nothing. Just that I wanted to leave early and meet someone in the town centre. There was a traffic snarl up along the President’s Road. The person could not understand that and she made so much fuss about it. She claimed that I did not want to meet her anyway and that I was just making a flimsy excuse. I was so annoyed that I came back to the staffroom; at least to wait until the road was less congested. (On a light note.) I mean, to wait for you. At least you would understand.

Miss Haja: I am sorry for that. She should have been patient with you. Everyone knows that the infrastructure in this town can no longer hold
the growing masses of people. It is not expected that the government is about to expand the roads now. It is unperturbed by the issue. In addition to that, whenever the weather is as it is now, people always want to rush and get home early.

**Mr. Kasuku:** The dark clouds seem like an omen to me. They seem to say that this will not be a very pleasant evening.

**Miss Haja:** I hope not.

**Mr. Kasuku:** In short, I was waiting for you.

**Miss Haja:** As a replacement to your girlfriend who declined to meet you?

**Mr. Kasuku:** Who said it was my girlfriend?

**Miss Haja:** Ok Mr. Kasuku. I want to talk to a student in here. Am afraid we will need privacy.

**Mr. Kasuku:** Privacy?

**Miss Haja:** Yes Mr. Kasuku.

**Mr. Kasuku:** (Jokingly) You can’t find privacy anywhere in this world.

**Miss Haja:** Privacy in this case means that you leave and allow us to use this room.

**Mr. Kasuku:** Are you chasing me out of my workstation? There should be a room in the school where such activities should be carried out.

**Miss Haja:** You know very well that there is no such a facility. Will you kindly allow me to use this office?

**Mr. Kasuku:** So where do you want me to go? Bear in mind that I was waiting for you.

**Miss Haja:** Please do not make matters complicated. You had not informed me earlier that you would wait for me. *(On a light note,)* In any case, I was just a last option!

**Mr. Kasuku:** Ok. Let me leave. Enjoy yourselves!

 *(Picks the newspaper and folds it then stands to leave.)*

So what is it you want to talk about?

**Miss Haja:** Please leave Mr. Kasuku. We will talk more tomorrow. I have already kept the girl waiting. It is getting late and I need to finish talking to her and go home.
Mr. Kasuku:  (Walking out) Have your way. Good evening.
(From outside.)
Oh! It is you Taby. How are you?
(Their voices can be heard from outside, though what they are saying is not audible.)

Miss Haja:  (Loud enough for her to hear.) Come in Taby.
(Taby walks in after a few seconds.)
Sit on that chair. (Points to the chair that is directly opposite her. Taby sits nervously.)
Now tell me. What is the issue?

Taby:  (Nervous) It is something about the school....You know... I was fearing...

Miss Haja:  What were you fearing?
Taby: It is about me and the school.

Miss Haja:  What about it?
Taby:  (Hesitating.) I fear that...

Miss Haja:  You need to bear in mind that it is getting late. I should have left the school compound by now.

Taby:  (Still nervous.) Yes madam.

Miss Haja:  The clouds are threatening to give in to the weight of the water they carry any time from now.

Taby: Yes madam. I am afraid I might take a lot of your time. I can still talk to you tomorrow.

Miss Haja:  (In a firm voice.) Enough of hesitation Taby. You requested to talk to me now. Go straight to the point.

Taby: Teacher, this is out of desperation, it is not really something I wanted to tell anyone.
(She does not know how to proceed and goes quiet.)

Miss Haja:  Yes? Go on.

Taby: (Looking at the door to ensure there is no one is eavesdropping.) Do you promise you’ll not tell anyone....It is very sensitive information.

Miss Haja:  Taby, I am not your age mate! If it something that has to be said. It must be said.
Taby: I need your assurance madam because if the principal gets to know that 
I shared what I am about to, he will expel me from the school.

Miss Haja: Why should he do that?

Taby: I am under his custody. I stay in his home when the schools close and he 
pays my school fees.

Miss Haja: Oh! I did not know you are the girl under his custody. Fine. I 
promise to keep this confidential. Go on.

Taby: As you might know, I was affected in the recent pregnancy tests that 
were carried out by the nurse.

Miss Haja: (This gets her off guard and she is not sure how to respond) 
Mmm... I am listening.

Taby: It is unfortunate that I am one of those who tested pregnant.

(Silence.)

Miss Haja: (Wondering what the student is up to.) I know.

Taby: It is humiliating and I feel disturbed. I don’t know how to go about it.

Miss Haja: I understand. It is a terrible situation to be in especially at your 
age.

Taby: I am really devastated. I don’t know how I will bear with this condition. 
Some students look at me suspiciously and not many want to associate 
with me now.

Miss Haja: Do they know your condition?

Taby: I suspect they do from the way they are behaving towards me.

Miss Haja: You have to accept the situation as it is now. You have heard 
people say when the going gets tough, you also get tough.

Taby: I will try my level best. I feel depressed. What am I supposed to do? 
(Getting emotional) I never thought this would happen to me. Why me? 
(Shedding tears.)

Miss Haja: Taby, you have to realize that this has already happened. Accept it 
then we can find the way forward.

Taby: (Attempting to recover.) What way forward? There is no way forward. I am 
doomed and my life has come to an end. I remember what you always tell 
us. Once a girl gets pregnant while she is still pursuing her studies, her 
life comes to a standstill.
**Miss Haja:** That does not mean you do not have a future. Accept the situation as it is. This means that you should be ready to undergo stigma and rejection, but you must be devoted to carry your pregnancy to term and deliver the child you carry safely.

**Taby:** That alone makes me shudder. How will I carry a pregnancy? How will I deliver?

**Miss Haja:** Life is like walking up a building using the staircase. You take one step at a time. Live a day at a time.

**Taby:** I wish it were that easy. What is likely to become of me? Do you think the principal will expel us from the school?

**Miss Haja:** Have you spoken to him? He is your guardian.

**Taby:** There is so much that has been going through my mind. I thought he would call me when he saw the results but he has not. I sometimes console myself that my name might not be in the nurse’s report after all.

**Miss Haja:** Do you mean that the principal did not inform the specific girls? Do you know who the other girls that are in your state?

**Taby:** I don’t. The other students are only speculating in hushed tones. It is difficult to know which rumour is true. The principal has not yet named the students who tested pregnant. He just told us that three girls in the school are pregnant. He was very annoyed with us. I think he will expel us from the school.

**Miss Haja:** In that case, how did you know that you are pregnant?

**Taby:** *(Nervous)* I know. I already feel it.

*(Silence.)*

**Miss Haja:** I do not know what his decision will be, but whatever the decision, you will have to be strong willed in order to face the consequences of your state.

*(Taby is in deep thought. There is silence as Miss Haja figures out what else she should tell Taby.)*

**Taby:** *(Wipes her tears and looks at Miss Haja.)*

Anyway teacher, there is an issue of more concern.

**Miss Haja:** What is the issue?

**Taby:** It is about the man who is responsible for this. *(Hesitating.)*
Miss Haja: What about him? Does he know that you are pregnant with his child?
Taby: I can’t dare imagine how he will perceive it.
Miss Haja: Have you talked to him about it? Is there a possibility that he will take responsibility?
Taby: I have not yet because I fear him. He threatened that I should neither blame him nor mention his name if I ever got pregnant.
Miss Haja: He threatened you? What kind of a man is he?
Taby: He is very strict and firm. He keeps threatening me.
(Looks at the door to be sure that there is not one there.)
Miss Haja: That is something that should be taken seriously. You should have confided in someone lest he does something harmful to you. For how long have you known him? Is he your boyfriend?
Taby: He is not my boyfriend. (Hesitating.) I am not sure.
Miss Haja: Taby, you need to be sincere. Do you mean that you have several boyfriends?
Taby: That is not the case. It is a complex issue madam. I hope I will be able to tell it all. I am so confused. Do you think the school will send me away?
Miss Haja: I told you I am not sure of that. The principal will be the one to decide but the rules of the Ministry of Education state that you should be allowed to stay in school until your time of delivery comes when you can go and deliver then come back when you are fully recovered.
Taby: Madam, the conception was caused by the principal.
Miss Haja: (She is utterly dismayed and does not know what to say.)
What do you mean? You want to mean he knows about it? I mean, he knows the man who was involved?
Taby: No madam. I mean to say that he is responsible for this pregnancy.
Miss Haja: (Completely taken aback, her mouth is wide open. She raises her hand to cover her open mouth.)
Oh God of mercy! Are you sure Taby? I hope what you are saying is true. If you are just making an accusation so that you escape any punishment, you will have yourself to blame.
**Taby:** Madam, whatever I am telling you is the truth. There is no exaggeration whatsoever.

**Miss Haja:** (Recovering a little bit from the shock.) Such an allegation can be very perilous. Ensure you say the truth because if what you are saying is not true, I will report you to the principal.

**Taby:** It happened over the holiday. You see, I stay in his house sometimes over the holiday. This happens when he does not have money for us to travel upcountry. I come from a very poor background. My father died when I was barely a year and left my mother with the responsibility of taking care of six children. This is a heavy task for her since she is not employed and the only property we have is a small piece of land. The principal is a neighbour back at home so when he saw our suffering, he promised to come with me to town and ensure that I get a decent school here. That is how he put it.

**Miss Haja:** This is to say that you are in his custody when you are in town?

**Taby:** Yes. He is my only guardian. He is the one in charge of my well-being. This includes all my expenditure in and outside school.

**Miss Haja:** Does that also include the school fees?

**Taby:** The sponsors pay the school fees, but he insists that it is as if it were him paying because if it were not for him, I would not have got the sponsorship.

**Miss Haja:** So what transpired?

**Taby:** What happened was against my will.

**Miss Haja:** Were you raped?

**Taby:** No, but... (Hesitates.)

**Miss Haja:** We have always said that you should take care of yourself. I personally keep warning you to guard against pre-marital sex. At your age, you should be very careful how you relate with men, especially those that are not your relatives. Taby, have I not always insisted about this?

**Taby:** Madam, you have. I always listen to you and take care of myself, but this was an unfortunate situation. I didn't want it to happen and the turn of events that led to it were unexpected.
Miss Haja: What happened?

Taby: He says that nothing comes free; I have to do what he wants in order for him to buy for me school uniform, books and everything I need.

Miss Haja: That’s outrageous. (Obviously shocked.) I hope all this is true! How did all this happen?

Taby: The entire experience dates back to almost a year ago. He normally talks to me the time when there is only the two of us in the house.

Miss Haja: Who stays in the house?

Taby: His wife and two children stay with him. There are occasional visitors at times. However, this particular Sunday morning, he announced before the rest of us that he was annoyed with my performance and that he was going to punish me. The punishment would be to stay home and spend the whole day studying. He also claimed that he had noted that I was always excited on Sundays because I had some illicit affairs with men, and the day provided an opportunity for me to meet them.

Miss Haja: Was this the first time he was punishing you in such a way?

Taby: He had been very friendly towards me initially, especially when I was still new in this school. I was in Form Two by then. He would encourage me when my performance was poor, but by this time, he had developed an unfriendly nature that I could not understand.

Miss Haja: What happened?

Taby: His wife pleaded with him but he could listen to none of it. Minayo, his firstborn daughter, insisted on staying but he was abnormally harsh to her. He admonished them by stating that he had also noted that they were not according him the respect he deserved as the head of the family and that he could take the necessary action if they provoked him. Everyone was quiet. Then he turned to me, I still remember his words, “Everyone is going to church. That is of course except for you little sinner. Taby, I will not allow laziness in my house. If you can’t work, you will not find peace here. Nothing is manna in this house! I also work to get what I have! So I will not allow your stomach to enjoy what you have not worked for.”
Then facing the rest, he sternly stated,
“Move to the car!”
(Miss Haja looks at her in surprise.)
(With tears in her eyes) With that, they all got into the car and he speedily drove off. This was how he usually drove when he was infuriated.
(Taby speaks the following words as a monologue. It is as a stream of consciousness, a reminiscence of sorts. She now does not face Miss Haja but stares into the space. Taby painfully recounts her experience. At some point, tears flow undeterred down her face.)
I was so annoyed and bitter with him and my life. Why did God allow me to be born in a poor family and why was I still suffering? Why was the principal so harsh with me yet he was the source of my frustration and the consequent failure in my exams? He had made several attempts before, to touch my body and forcefully hug me. Whenever I pushed him away and said that what he was doing was wrong, he would get annoyed and say that I had misunderstood him. He would say that I had mistaken him and that he needed to be close to me since my parents were not around. If I had a father to hug me, my pain and sorrow would disappear. What he was doing was what a father was supposed to do. I allowed him for a minute, but my conscience would not allow. It seared my inner being as a hot iron. I pushed him away. In one incident, he told me that I would have to allow him to do it. Otherwise, I would not get a skirt and shoes when school opened. That very minute, like an angel sent by God, his wife entered the sitting room. “Taby, that Mathematics sum is a bit complicated. Go and fetch me a glass of water as I figure it out.” He said as a matter of fact. His wife suspected nothing. I left for the kitchen.

Miss Haja:  (In a concerned voice.) Taby, did you report this to anyone?
Taby:  (She is still in her reverie and has not heard was Miss Haja has said.)
Another time he told me that he loved me, because my legs where very smooth and that I had a beautiful body that I should be happy about. I told him that I didn’t enjoy such talk. He said I took life too seriously and
went his way. With time, I did not know what to do because he would threaten to send me back home. I also became gullible and got used to his kind of talk. He would always sneak into my room when his wife was not around. If I was reluctant to respond to his touches, he would threaten me the more. I would then allow him but I always felt guilty after every such an encounter. Unfortunately, the next time he would be so pleasant with his words until I would feel so vulnerable and allow him to do it again.

Miss Haja: Good gracious! You should have told his wife.

Taby: On this particular day, he came back after the church service without his family.

(The following part is supposed to be a play within a play portrayed as a flashback of what actually happened. Miss Haja watches silently.)

(Taby is sitting at the study table. The door slowly opens Judas walks in. Taby is startled to see him.)

Judas: Hello Taby? (Moving closer to her.)

I am very sorry for my anger towards you this morning and for being harsh to you. I did not intend it, just that I am concerned about your performance. In the course of preaching my sermon this morning during the church service, it came to my mind that I should make peace with the people I have wronged because that is what God’s word demands of me. You were the first person to come to my mind. I therefore told myself that I should come straight away and apologize to you.

(Taby stares at him in amazement. She is confused and does not know where this is leading.)

Come here my dear.

(He moves closer to her. Taby moves back but he moves to embrace her. Taby is able to resist his grip.)

Stop fearing my dear. Trust me. This is a sacrifice that I am making. I was supposed to visit the Lazarus family with my wife but I excused myself in order to come and make peace with you.

Taby: (Still afraid but summoning courage.) I am tired of all these. I want to be treated with dignity.
Judas: I felt it was wrong for me as the pastor of the church to go and visit another family yet my own was not fine. I am from church and I love you with the love of Christ. You do not need to fear me anymore because from today, I will take good care of you.

Taby: I am fine. You can go back to your church. Leave me alone.

(Completely overwhelmed, breaks into sobs.) Why did you bring me from the village only to come and mistreat me here in town? Does that make you happy?

Judas: (Making use of the moment to embrace her.) I am sorry my daughter. Come here. This will never happen again.

Taby: (At first resists, but gives in.) Why do you treat me this way? You have made me suffer a lot of emotional trauma.

Judas: (He holds her for some time. She is still sobbing) Don’t cry anymore.

(Wipes her tears using his handkerchief.) You will need some rest now. I will take you to your bed you will be fine.

(Holding her hand.) Come.

(Taby follows him.)

(Judas walks out. Taby stands at the door and turns to look at Miss Haja.)

(Taby becomes hysterical. She is shaking uncontrollably.)

Miss Haja: (Alarmed) Are you all right?

(Moving closer to her.)

Taby.

(Touching her shoulder.)

Taby: (Shouting and pushing her away.) Don’t touch me. You lied to me.

Miss Haja: Taby. It is me. Miss Haja.

Taby: Who?

Miss Haja: It is Miss Haja. We are in school.

(Taby is shivering more and more. Miss Haja holds her hand and helps her to sit on the chair.)

Taby, are you all right?
(Taby seems to be in a trance. Miss Haja shakes her in an attempt to bring her back to reality.)
Look at me. Taby!
(Taby shivers more and more and has started to sweat profusely.)
Taby, try to relax. You will be fine if you stop working yourself up.
(Miss Haja realizes that her efforts to help Taby get back to normal are not yielding fruit. To herself.)
I will have to call the nurse.
(Miss Haja moves to get her handbag. She searches for her phone in her handbag but cannot find it. She glances at Taby whose condition has not changed. She is worked up and frantically empties some of the contents in her bag onto the table.)
(To herself.) Where on earth did I place my cell phone?
(She finally finds it on one of the side pockets. She dials a number, and then places the phone on her right ear.)
(On phone) Hello? Yes. Is that...
(Looking at the cell phone.)
Oh no! I don’t have any credits! Taby, remain calm I’ll get some water for you before I get the nurse.
(She gets a bottle of water from her handbag and helps Taby to drink. There is a short silence as Miss Haja observes Taby. Taby gradually stops sweating and is recovering.)
You will be all right Taby. Take more water.
(Taby takes a sip of the water. After some period of silence.)

**Taby:** Did I tell you everything?
**Miss Haja:** Do you feel better now?

**Taby:** Yes. That was very traumatizing.
**Miss Haja:** Sure. Sit there as I send someone to call the nurse.
**Taby:** I do not need the nurse. I am ok.
**Miss Haja:** Are you sure?

**Taby:** That is not the complete story.
**Miss Haja:** That is not all?

**Taby:** What did I tell you?
Miss Haja: You told me how he took you to your bedroom.

Taby: (Shivers) I had a combination of feelings. I didn’t know whether to allow him or not. Overall, after a short tussle, his words flattered me and I allowed him. (Facing Miss Haja.) That is how it happened.

Miss Haja: I can’t believe this!

Taby: I felt so bad after that. I hated myself for having done it with him. I felt that it would have been better if I would have done it with a young man. I also felt very guilty.

Miss Haja: Did you confide this to anyone?

Taby: I did not have anyone to share with. In any case, he became so keen with my movements since the incident and did not allow me to talk to other people. I was confined to the house throughout. He threatened me that if I told his wife, that would be the end of my schooling.

Miss Haja: You should have told me.

Taby: It is not easy to find confidence in your teacher. I feared that he might find out and do the worst.

Miss Haja: What kind of a person is his wife? You should have spoken to her.

Taby: She has always been unhappy with my stay in her house. She always finds fault with everything I do and accuses me of wasting her husband’s money. To her, I am not part of the family. It would have made things worse if I reported the experience to her.

Miss Haja: That is unfortunate.

Taby: He told his wife the same night that he had long suspected that I had an affair with a certain boy. He had come from church just to confirm it and sure enough, he found him an I in my bed. I was so shocked I could not believe that he could formulate such a lie.

Miss Haja: What!

Taby: His wife was so annoyed that she beat me up and said I would not spend the night in her house. I was so petrified. She pushed me out of the house and locked the door.

Miss Haja: (Holds her face in her palms in a deep sense of desperation and failure to imagine such atrocities.) Oh my! At what time was it?

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**Taby:** It was around eight in the night. I went and sat in the garage for some time. The empty space in the garage reflected the emptiness I felt in my being. The cold was so unbearable that I decided to go and look for the only other person I knew in the town. This young man had been an acquaintance in the village and had at once come to visit the principal’s family. He had said that he lived four blocks away. I made up my mind that I would request him to give me money for my bus fare back to the village. As luck would have it, I succeeded in knocking on his door. He was shocked to see me at that time in of the night. I requested him to put me on the bus that same night, but he argued that it would be better if I spent the night in his house, then he would talk to Judas the following morning. I insisted that I needed to travel but he would hear none of it. He stated that he would be the first to be suspected by Judas if I disappeared out of town. He said that he did not want to get into trouble with him since he was a kinsman. I wept a lot that night.

**Miss Haja:** It is true you went through all that!

**Taby:** I was so nervous sleeping with him on the same bed, especially because it was not something I had done before. I did not get any sleep that night. He attempted consoling me but I kept crying. Towards the morning, he managed to convince me that if I did it with him, I would forget all my problems. I felt so vulnerable. To be sincere with you madam, I had always had a soft spot for him. I also felt that I had nothing to lose after what the principal had done to me.

**Miss Haja:** *(Very dismayed.)* Taby! You did it again?

**Taby:** Do not condemn me any more madam. I am already guilty and as things stand now, I bear a very heavy burden of my actions.

**Miss Haja:** I am very sorry for what happened.

**Taby:** Evans left very early in the morning and said that I should go back to my guardian’s home and plead with him so that he could take me back.

**Miss Haja:** He did not accompany you as earlier agreed?

**Taby:** I think he felt guilty after what he had done. Dejected, I walked back to my guardian’s house. I met the principal’s wife at the door. She said that
she did not want to see me and would ensure that I would be sent back to the village.

**Miss Haja:** What did the principal say?

**Taby:** The wife was on her way out. The principal was seated on the couch reading a newspaper. He walked to the window to ensure that his wife had gone out of the gate. He came back, held me, and shook me violently and said, “If I ever hear a word of this from anyone else, you will regret why you were ever born.” Then added as an afterthought, “And if you find yourself pregnant, never mention my name. Do you understand?” With that, he went to his bedroom. I kept crying the whole day. Those were the worst days of my life.

**Miss Haja:** What happened after that?

**Taby:** From that day on, the principal and his wife ignored me and nothing was ever said about the matter again until I came to school this term. They ensured that I was in the house throughout.

**Miss Haja:** I am stunned. What you went through is unimaginable!

(Silence as Miss Haja contemplates what to say.)

Did you ever meet the other man again?

**Taby:** No. That was the only time I saw him.

**Miss Haja:** In this case, who is responsible for your pregnancy?

**Taby:** Madam, I keep asking myself that question. At times, I feel like a very cheap prostitute.

**Miss Haja:** This is indeed a very complicated situation.

(Silence.)

Did you tell me that the principal has not spoken a word to you?

**Taby:** He called me last week just before the nurse carried out the tests and warned me not to mention his name to anyone if I tested pregnant. He said I should see him in his office after the results were out. If I behaved well, he said, he would help me.

**Miss Haja:** What a terrible state to be in. I am very sorry for what happened.

**Taby:** I am extremely afraid. I dread the worst will happen. That is why I felt I needed to share with someone. I came to you Miss Haja because I trust you. I will appreciate if you assist me in any way possible. However, my
main aim was to share my experience with you so that the weight of the emotions I carry becomes a bit light.

**Miss Haja:** You made the right decision to come and share with me. It is necessary for you to have a confidant in such situations.

**Taby:** Thank you madam for availing yourself for this noble task.

**Miss Haja:** There is one major thing you should bear in mind at this time, that what you now carry in your womb is a precious life. It is a child whose life should be protected. In as much as you conceived in such unfathomable circumstances, it is innocent and should be given the chance to live. Do you understand what I mean?

**Taby:** Yes, I do madam.

**Miss Haja:** This is to say that you should never allow the thought of abortion to come near your mind. (Looks at Taby to determine whether she understands what she has said.)

**Taby:** Yes madam.

**Miss Haja:** There are many stories of people who become very influential and successful in life, but when you trace their stories back to their conception, you realize that they were conceived in very embarrassing and painful situations. You have no idea of who the child you deliver will be.

**Taby:** I will think about it that way madam.

**Miss Haja:** Please do. He might be a president of this country who will redeem the people from the extreme poverty that landed you in this unfortunate situation.

**Taby:** I wish it would be so.

**Miss Haja:** You are such a brave girl. It takes courage for a student to come out and tell her teacher the truth about her life. You have done the right thing.

**Taby:** Thank you for being an understanding person. I do not know what I would have done if I did not know you.

**Miss Haja:** You are welcome. As things stand now, I cannot determine your fate as far as the principal’s decision is concerned. We expected that he would give out his ruling on the action he will take concerning the
pregnant girls today, but from the look of things, we will have to wait until tomorrow. Whatever the situation, you will have to be very strong willed.

**Taby**: I will try my level best.

**Miss Haja**: It is already 6:30 pm. You should be in the dining hall taking supper.

**Taby**: I have no appetite for food. The ugali cooked in this school can sometimes be nauseating.

**Miss Haja**: Remember you are now pregnant. You will need to eat. You will have to bear with it and eat as much of it as you can for now. The other students might be surprised about your whereabouts. I should be leaving now.

**Taby**: I am very grateful to you. Have a good evening.

**Miss Haja**: Have a good evening too. Remember you should not worry yourself to death.

**Taby**: Sure.

(Taby leaves the staffroom. Miss Haja picks her items that are on the table and puts them into her handbag as she prepares to leave.)
Scene 2

The setting is in the Form Three classroom. It is at 9:10 pm, a time when the students are done with their night preps. There is noise as the students are leaving the class for the dormitory. In a few minutes, only Petty Kiindo and another student remain in room doing their studies.

**Student**: (Raising her head to look at Kiindo.) Isn’t it surprising that today you are doing the extension?

**Kiindo**: How does it concern you?

**Student**: Just interested. It is unlike you to go the extra mile. You are always asleep even before the official preps time is over. Now, as I see, Saul has become Paul.

**Kiindo**: Please, mind your own business!

**Student**: Ok. I am sorry. I would have been happy if I had found company. I am always alone at this time.

**Kiindo**: The likes of you do not need company. Book worms have books as their company.

**Student**: I … (The door opens and Nanjala walks in.)

**Nanjala**: It is such a dark night today! How are you girls? You are still around?

**Kiindo**: Fine. It is always dark in this school than it is anywhere else in the world!

**Nanjala**: (To student.) That was meant to be a greeting!

**Student**: I am fine.

**Nanjala**: (Walking towards Kiindo.) How are you finding Form Three? I keep wishing I were in Form Three now. There is so much work in Form Four!

**Kiindo**: It is equally bad here. I don’t have enough time to finish my assignments let alone revising for the soon coming end of term exams.

**Nanjala**: (Pulling a chair and sitting next to her.) Keep working hard. You will finally manage.
**Student:** Would you two mind shutting up? I have work to finish before I call it a day.

**Kiindo:** Cool down madam! Why is it that you feel like you are the only serious student in this school?

**Student:** You can say all that you want to but bear in mind that this is meant to be a study room not a story telling room! If you care, I was number one last term! This is how I do it!

**Kiindo:** *(Angrily.)* You...

**Nanjala:** *(Interrupting.)* Kiindo, hold your peace. She is right. *(To the student)* I am sorry we interrupted you. Would you please give me room to talk to Kiindo? You can use the Form Four classroom. It is quiet there. Most of the girls have left.

**Kiindo:** She was just talking to me before you came in.

**Student:** *(Ignoring Kiindo. Stands up and picks up her books.)* I respect you because not only are you a prefect but you also are a reasonable person. You should teach that to that woman seated next to you how to....

**Kiindo:** *(Butting in.)* I will... *(Nanjala puts her hand over her mouth.)*

**Nanjala:** Kiindo! Let her go. We are on the wrong. *(The student leaves the classroom.)*

*(Turning to Kiindo.)*

We don’t have much time. You wanted to talk to me?

**Kiindo:** Yes I do. I have a matter that is confidential that I wanted to share with you.

**Nanjala:** Confidential?

**Kiindo:** It is a secret that I want to disclose to you, but you have to promise that you will not tell anyone.

**Nanjala:** Ok.

**Kiindo:** You can’t just say ok! Look here, I want to tell you because you have been a long time friend since primary school. Though we have not been very close friends lately, I know that you are not the type who gossip. *(Holding her hands with her two hands.)* Please promise not to tell anyone.

**Nanjala:** You can trust me. I will not. I keep secrets.
Kiindo: Please do not be tempted to tell it to any teacher or the principal. I know you are very close to them.

Nanjala: I will not.

Kiindo: Fine! Have I ever told you that I have a boyfriend?

Nanjala: You can’t be serious! Since when?

Kiindo: You are a church mouse my friend! I got hooked to one when I was in Form Two.

Nanjala: You were a very good girl when we were in primary school. What happened to you?

Kiindo: Times change. Some of my friends kept laughing at me. My parents are not well off as you may know. My friends kept making fun of me that I did not have enough shopping as they did. When I told them that I was from a poor home, they laughed the more.

Nanjala: So you were affected by their laughing?

Kiindo: One day, one girl told me that a certain boy who said that my beauty stunned him had sent her to me. I said an outright no. The girl was shocked. How could a poor girl like me turn such a wealthy boy’s offer down? She said that she wished she were the one.

Nanjala: So you agreed?

Kiindo: Nanjala, don’t act such an angel! There is so much peer pressure in this school to have a boyfriend or two. Are you sincere that you don’t have one?

Nanjala: I don’t and will not succumb to anyone’s pressure! That peer pressure is only from part of the students. If you keep the wrong company, then you are sure to fall into that kind of trap. That is why I say as Shakespeare put it in the play Macbeth, “A great perturbation in nature.”

Kiindo: You really have read many books. I don’t read that much. What does that mean?

Nanjala: It means that we no longer do things the right way. Why would there be a lot of peer pressure to have a boyfriend at this age as opposed to pressure to work hard in one’s studies and perform well, which is the right and most natural thing?
Kiindo: I don’t know, but I succumbed to the pressure. I now wish I did not.
Nanjala: I am sorry dear. That was bad.
Kiindo: The same group of friends laughed at me when they later on realized that I was still a virgin. One said that she enjoyed doing it so much.
Nanjala: Oh my! You listened to her?
Kiindo: The girl who had introduced me to the boy claimed that she had been eyeing my boyfriend. If I could not satisfy him, she could as well do it.
Nanjala: That was evil! Is that what you call friends? I wish someone could stop all this madness.
Kiindo: If only the principal was strict enough in matters concerning discipline. Nanjala, let me tell you. If that was the case, I probably could not be in the state I today.
Nanjala: What state are you in? Do you mean that...
Kiindo: (Interrupting) Don’t preempt my story. Just listen.
Nanjala: Fine. I am listening.
Kiindo: At that time, I did not take the girl seriously. During one of the holidays, she threatened that she would convince my boyfriend to jilt me if I did not have sex with him. That would mark the end of the money he was giving me. This alarmed me because by then, I was used to the lifestyle of having all the money I needed.
Nanjala: Why did you do that my dear? You have seen some girls in this school whose parents cannot even afford any shopping but they still survive and do very well in their studies.
Kiindo: You should have talked to me the way you are doing at that time. Not now. The milk is already spilt. My performance kept dropping as a result of all these. I was number thirty eight out of the forty students in our class last term.
Nanjala: That is unfortunate.
Kiindo: I agree. I did not want to let the money go. My greatest fear was: What if I got pregnant? I spoke to the girl afterwards and told her that I was ready to do it, but told her I feared that I would get pregnant.

Nanjala: Is this a true story?

Kiindo: Listen Nanjala. I called you to tell you the whole of it. She said that I was so backward and as if she was waiting for that very moment, she gave me some tablets, which she said that I should swallow just before I did it.

Nanjala: You swallowed the tablets? They could have been poison!

Kiindo: I did not swallow them. After two days, I reasoned with myself and came back to my senses. I threw the tablets away.

Nanjala: That was a good thing you did.

Kiindo: Maybe not. That girl kept asking whether I had met my boyfriend, but I was wise to make all manner of excuses. However, as we keep saying, a thief only has forty days. She managed to put me in a compromising situation one day over the holidays. She invited me to join her and visit her friend, which I gladly did because my parents had travelled upcountry and I was alone at home that day. We arrived at her friend’s place only to find that my boyfriend was the only one there. She made an excuse and left almost immediately.

Nanjala: Is that for real? What happened?

Kiindo: He is a very good person. We just talked and he excused himself saying that he had to meet his parents. I also left for home.

Nanjala: That was responsible of him. It is good that you did not compromise your standards.

Kiindo: Yes, but that was not the end of it. She followed to find out what happened and I told her that this was not the time for sex. She kept pestering me but I resisted all her attempts. I was happy when the schools opened; at least it was easier to run away from her tricks.

Nanjala: You should cut off your communication with her completely. She is not a genuine friend. There must be something fishy she is up to.
Kiindo: I thought so and cut off communication with her when we came back to school. Soon after that, I had an experience I would never forget. My boyfriend sent me a letter stating that he was very sick and wanted to see me immediately. He suggested in the long letter that I should lie to the principal that I was going for a medical check-up. Included in the envelope was a letter from a certain doctor that I was to undergo a medical check up on the given date. “Please do not fail me sweetheart.” That is how he signed off.

(Nanjala looks at her in dismay.)

I was so moved by that letter.

Nanjala: Kiindo!

Kiindo: In the evening, I went to the principal and gave him the doctor’s letter. He signed it and gave me a permission sheet. I was to leave the following day at lunchtime.

Nanjala: (Shocked.) You mean the principal did not suspect that anything was wrong?

Kiindo: He did not. I had overheard some girls say that if you wanted him to do something for you, go to his office when he is in a jovial mood or when he is in a hurry, but then, you also have to be very cunning with what you tell him. I was lucky because I went to his office; he was in a hurry to leave. I did not have to talk much.

Nanjala: (She is so shocked to the extent that she is not sure how to respond to this.) How could you do that?

Kiindo: I met my boyfriend at a friend’s place as he had directed in the letter. His friend left at night and we spent the night together. I realized that I was pregnant a month later when I was in school.

Nanjala: (She pushes her chair backwards in shock.) What! You are pregnant!

Kiindo: It was so painful that I got pregnant the first time I did it. I came back to school the following day.

Nanjala: All this sounds like a movie to me!

Kiindo: He gave me money to hire a certain woman who would bring me back to school in the pretext that she was my aunt. The woman provides
such services. Luckily, she convinced Mr. Muimu who was on duty that week. I was allowed in.

Nanjala: Oh my! What a ridiculous school we have! Do you want to say that Mr. Muimu did not smell a rat?

Kiindo: The gateman informed us that the principal was not in. The woman told Mr. Muimu that she had been directed to him by the principal. He told me to ensure I saw the principal when he came back. I never did.

Nanjala: The principal never followed up the matter?

Kiindo: No.

Nanjala: Did this for sure happen?

Kiindo: Why should I lie to you?

Nanjala: Oh my!

Kiindo: My boyfriend wrote to me a week later and told me that he regretted what he had done after discovering that it had all been a hoax arranged by my friend and some other people. He disclosed that he was not the one who wrote the letter I had received.

Nanjala: What! How did he come to meet you in that case?

Kiindo: The same trick had been played on him.

Nanjala: All that was a trap you fell into?

Kiindo: Yes.

(Brief silence.)

Nanjala: I am really shocked by what you have told me. Did you write back to your boyfriend informing him of the pregnancy?

Kiindo: I did. He could do nothing. He said he was sorry and that that had not been his intention.

Nanjala: Did he accept to admit that he was responsible for your pregnancy?

Kiindo: He said that he would have to inform his parents first before he answered that question.

Nanjala: Oh my God!

Kiindo: That is the long and short of the story.
Nanjala: (Still stunned.) I am very sorry that happened to you. Are you sure you are pregnant?

Kiindo: I wish it were a dream. I managed to contact the same woman who brought me to school that day. She has arranged for an abortion. I am to do it this coming holiday.

Nanjala: (Stands up in shock.) Kiindo! Don’t do that, you might die.

Kiindo: I will not die. My confusion is that now the principal already knows that I am pregnant. I had planned that I would come back to school next term after the abortion. I now don’t know what to do.

Nanjala: Do your parents know this?

Kiindo: They don’t. I will have to look for a way to trick them so that they can agree to transfer me to another school next term.

Nanjala: Please Kiindo. Reconsider your decision. You might make things worse. This is an opportunity for you to make things right.

Kiindo: It is not that easy. You would feel the heat if you were in my shoes.

Nanjala: Please do. We can talk to the principal who will in turn talk to your parents.

Kiindo: You speak like you do not know how the principal reacts to such things. It the reaction of potassium placed on water.

Nanjala: What do we do?

Kiindo: I already told you my decision. Do you have a solution for me?

Nanjala: Please don’t do that Kiindo. Give me up to tomorrow and I will have come up with something. My parents are very warm and understanding people. You could even come and stay with us until you deliver.

Kiindo: That is impossible!

Nanjala: Don’t rule out anything now. Give me up to tomorrow.

(Brief silence as the two are in thought.)

You have really shocked me tonight. I don’t know whether I will find any sleep today.

Kiindo: Join me in the league.

Nanjala: What league?
Kiindo: I scarcely get any sleep for the last two months. I think I am depressed.

Nanjala: I am sorry Kiindo. You will be all right.

Kiindo: I feel better that I have finally shared this with someone who is sensible.

Nanjala: You are welcome. You should have done this a long time ago.

Kiindo: There is so much gossip in this school. You never know whom to trust.

Nanjala: That is true. Hey! We need to go and rest. We have a long night ahead of us.

Kiindo: Before we do, don’t pity me so much. (Whispering.) Ororei is in a worse situation than I am.

Nanjala: What is it! She is also pregnant?

Kiindo: Not only that, the one who responsible is the one and only Mr. Wanyama!

Nanjala: What! Are you sure?

Kiindo: (Standing up and packing her books.) Rumour has it that he has denied it and has already planned to resign.

(Nanjala is tongue-tied.)

(Holding her hands and forcing her to stand.)

Stand up! We should be moving now!

(Nanjala is still in shock. She stands up and follows Kiindo who is already leaving the room.)
ACT 5

It is in the morning at 8:00 am. The bell rings. This indicates that the students should settle down in their classes for the first lesson. The principal is standing outside his office watching as the students move to their classes.

Principal:  
(In a loud voice.) Settle down in your classrooms at once!
(Silence as he watches the students run to their classes. Pointing at a student.) Come here!
(The student walks towards the principal.)
Inform Mercy that she should come to my office immediately.

Student:  Which form sir?

Principal:  Form Four.
(The student walks away.)
(Shouting.) Hey you! Run! Don’t walk as if this is a market place!
(He stands for a few minutes then walks into his office. Sits at his table and picks up his diary. Flips through the pages, occasionally reading what is written on them. Finally he picks up a pen and starts writing. To himself.)
I hope these girls will not give me headache.
(A knock on the door.)
Come in.
(Mercy walks in.)
Good morning.

Mercy:  Good morning sir.

Principal:  Do you remember what I told you yesterday?

Mercy:  Yes.

Principal:  (Gets a file from the shelf, opens a given page and gives it to her.)
Now you will have to fill in this form. Enter your complete name and your class. In the part of parents, state that your father is deceased. Write the year as 2008. Sign at the bottom of the form.

Mercy:  (Mercy is petrified and is reluctant to take the file.) I ...
**Principal:**  (Harshly.) I say fill it!

(Mercy fills the paper with shaking hands. The principal watches. She is done in a minute.)

(Brief silence.) Mercy, all this is not free.

(Mercy looks at him fearfully.)

You don’t need to fear. It is an assurance I need from you.

(Brief silence.)

Mercy, there are many things that have happened in this office that you know?

**Mercy:** Which things sir?

**Principal:** Stop pretending. I mean what has happened between you and me.

(Looks at her sternly.) Thou shall never mention any of it to anyone. If you do it, I will ensure that the sponsorship is withdrawn and sue you for claiming that your father is dead when he is not.

(Mercy looks at him in shock.)

I mean exactly that! Don’t ever say that I talked to you or did anything to you in this office. Get that into your little head! Is that clear Mercy?

**Mercy:** Yes sir.

Now go to class!

(Mercy turns and rushes out of the office.)

**Principal:** (Loud.) Mercy!

(Mercy comes back.) Tell Taby Shida to come to my office immediately! Don’t dare tell her a word of anything I told you! Neither should you tell any other student!

(Mercy walks out.)

(To himself.)

I will ensure that no one speaks evil of my name. I hope that little fool does not go around blurting out what she should not.

(Silence as he searches on the bookshelf for something. He finally picks up the Good News Bible and places it on the table. He moves back to the shelf and is busy looking for something else. He walks to his bag which is on the bench and picks the daily newspaper. Walks over to the chair and sits to read it.)
(There is a knock on the door.)
Come in.
(Enter Taby Shida.)
(Harshly.)
You obviously know why I have called you to my office.
(Taby is silent.)
Talk! I hope you have not blurted out anything to anyone?

_Taby:_ No.

**Principal:** That should be very clear in your mind. I don’t want to hear anything related to what happened to you when we were at home. Is that clear?

_Taby:_ But sir, I …

**Principal:** No buts! I don’t want you to drag my name into all this mess. You hear me?

_Taby:_ Yes.

**Principal:** Say yes sir!

_Taby:_ (Timidly) Yes sir.

**Principal:** If anyone demands to know who it is, say that you have a boyfriend in another school. You hear me?

_Taby:_ But that is not true. I don’t have a boyfriend.

**Principal:** You do as I say! If not, you will pay for it dearly.

( _Taby sheds tears._ ) There is nothing to cry about. Wipe your tears and go back to class.

_Taby:_ Will I be able to continue with my schooling?

**Principal:** I have helped you as much as it was within my capacity. Now go back to class at once.

_Taby:_ (Pleading.) Please sir. I beg you. You landed me in this situation. Have mercy on me.

**Principal:** I said go back to class!

( _Taby does not move and still looks at him with pleading eyes._ )
Come on. Go to class.
(She hesitates for a while then walks slowly towards the door. As she opens the door, she bumps into Mr. Muimu who is also walking into the office.)

**Mr. Muimu:** Hey! Young girl. Watch where you are going!

(Taby walks out without a word.)

**Principal:** Don’t mind her Muimu. These girls are so undisciplined such that one wonders what can be done to them. Being the principal of such students can be a real headache.

**Mr. Muimu:** I agree. What is her problem?

**Principal:** Leave her alone. She has come here to cry in my presence because she has realized she is pregnant. How does that change anything?

**Mr. Muimu:** These girls never cease to amuse me. I have not even said good morning! (Extending his hand to greet the principal.) How are you?

**Principal:** Good morning. Have a seat. I placed a memo in the staffroom very early in the morning. Have you seen it?

**Mr. Muimu:** Yes. That is why I am here.

**Principal:** Did the other teachers see it?

**Mr. Muimu:** I am not sure. There was no one in the staffroom when I arrived. Maybe they are in class.

**Principal:** I want us to hold an impromptu meeting now as the disciplinary committee and decide what to do about the case in our hands. We should do it now before the sponsors arrive. Miss Haja and Mr. Wanyama should be here by now. Time is moving.

**Mr. Muimu:** Let me find out where they are. Maybe they did not see the memo so they went to class.

**Principal:** Tell them that the meeting must to be held now. The other teachers should go to class.

**Mr. Muimu:** (Leaving the office.) Yes.

**Principal:** (To himself.)

I hope Miss Haja just wanted a salary increment. Otherwise, her ideals will worsen the situation in my school.

(Reading the newspaper.)

(Loudly)
The Ministry of Education will be going round schools to do a thorough inspection of schools. Any school that does not comply with the ministry’s rules will be closed immediately. The Minister for Education has warned that he will take stringent measures especially on the notorious mushrooming private schools that are well known for disobeying the rules.

(To himself.)
What is all this now? Somebody is up to no good. This will make a big dent in my pocket when these officials come around. They love money more than anything else!

(Knock on the door. Attempting to sit upright)
Yes. Come in. (Enters Miss Haja.)
Oh! It’s you Miss Haja. Come right in.

Miss Haja: Thank you sir, Good morning.
Principal: Good morning. Have a seat. We are waiting for you. Mr. Muimu has just gone out to look for you.
Miss Haja: I am sorry I have come in late. I had the first lesson in Form Two. I went to give out an assignment first.
Principal: That was not necessary. The meeting we need to have now is more critical than anything else is at this time. Have you seen Mr. Wanyama?
Miss Haja: No.
Principal: I have been suspecting that Mr. Wanyama misses most of his lessons. He might not even be in the school compound now!
(He folds the newspaper and places it on the shelf. He then picks up a folder that has documents from the shelf and places it on the table.)
(Mr. Muimu knocks on the door and comes in.)

Mr. Muimu: I am sorry I can’t trace him.
Principal: I suspected so. Mr. Muimu, are you sure that Mr. Wanyama is usually in school and attends to all his lessons?
Mr. Muimu: I don’t know sir. It is not easy to monitor another person’s movements when I am doing my work.
Principal: (Harshly.) That is part of your work. What do I give you the extra allowance for?
(Mr. Muimu looks at Miss Haja in a manner to signal to principal that he should not continue in that line of talk in Miss Haja’s presence.)
(The principal gets the cue.)
Sit down Mr. Muimu. We will start right away.
(Passing a bunch of foolscaps and a pen to Miss Haja.)
Miss Haja, kindly take the minutes in this meeting.
(Miss Haja takes the foolscaps and the pen and starts writing.)
This is the disciplinary panel that will deliberate, discuss, and decide the way forward concerning the three pregnant girls in the school. Mr. Muimu and Miss Haja, welcome to this very important meeting. Mr. Wanyama should have been here. He has not sent any apology.

Mr. Muimu: You can call Mr. Kasuku to replace him. He is in the Form Four class.

Principal: Mr. Kasuku is never interested about anything that happens in this school. He is like the biblical servant who was given a talent and did nothing with it. You can be sure he will not say anything that will help us concerning this matter. Miss Haja, open the meeting with a word of prayer.

Miss Haja: (Stands up.) Let us pray. God we thank you for this time that you have given us to sit and discuss the matter concerning our girls. We thank you because you know the girls and you have a good plan for their lives. We thank you for this school that is a tool to help them achieve their destinies. Father we pray for ourselves that you will help us to make the right decision concerning them. Give us the wisdom that we require concerning this matter. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Principal: Thank you Miss Haja for that prayer. Now (His phone rings. He receives it.) Hello.... Yes. ... Where are you?.... You will not report? .... That is not professional.... I mean exactly that.... What! .... Look here young man.... You have to learn good manners!
(He angrily disengages the call.)
(Looks at Mr. Muimu then Miss Haja.)
What is wrong with some people?
(Mr. Muimu and Miss Haja look at him.)
Mr. Wanyama has the courage to call me and tell me he cannot report for duty!

**Mr. Muimu:** Maybe he has a good reason.

**Principal:** What good reason! He says that he has resigned and will not even come to do it formally. He has travelled out of the country!

(Mr. Muimu and Miss Haja stare at the principal without a word.)

Did any of you know this?

(Mr. Muimu and Miss Haja shake their heads.)

I suspect that there is something fishy going on behind my back. Miss Haja, are you sure there is nothing you are hiding from me?

**Miss Haja:** I have no clue of what you are talking about.

**Principal:** If I find out that there is something you knew and did not tell me, I will not take it lying down.

(Silence as the principal attempts to recover from his agitation.)

Let us get back to the meeting. As I had stated earlier, we need to decide on what we are to do with the girls. As you might know, there is already a lot of anxiety among the girls. I am sure that there are enough speculations among them on what the principal will decide. As it were, all the eyes are on me. The decision we make should tell the girls that we do not condone any ill-mannered behaviour in this school. As stated in the Bible, spare the rod, spoil the child. I therefore urge you to be objective in your views. Feel free to contribute your thoughts. They will help me.

(Silence.)

We can start.

(Looking at Mr. Muimu.)

Mr. Muimu, what are your thoughts?

**Mr. Muimu:** I think the first thing to do is to call the parents of the particular girls and inform them about the state of their girls. After that, we can have a meeting with them and see what their perspective is.

**Principal:** That is a possibility, but we cannot just summon the parents when we have not decided on what to tell them. They can overturn the
final decision to favour themselves. Some of the parents are cunning and can make a decision on my behalf if they find that I don't have a final resolution of the matter.

(Brief silence.)

What do you think Miss Haja?

**Miss Haja:** (Miss Haja has been writing since the meeting began. Raising her head.) I partly agree with what Mr. Muimu has said, as well as your perspective of it. We will need to inform the parents of the girls. I think the best thing is to call them to school and let them know that their daughters are pregnant. From that point on, we can follow the rules of the ministry and have the girls go on with their schooling.

**Principal:** You should bear in mind that we also have other girls in the school. We should not make a decision that seems to favour the pregnant girls. If we do that, we will have this problem recurring.

**Miss Haja:** My perspective is that we need not punish the girls unnecessarily. We can let the girls stay in the school and as well reprimand them and the other girls against irresponsible sexual behaviour. We can do this by ensuring that we have more strict measures concerning discipline and monitoring the girls’ behaviour.

**Mr. Muimu:** I also am of the same opinion. The parents can decide to take the case to court if we expel the girls. This will end up as an ugly affair that will destroy the reputation of your school.

**Principal:** With all that you have said in mind, we need not be cowards. I have learnt in the school of life that if a decision is made out of fear, it never lasts. The Holy Bible also states that if you spare the rod, you spoil the child.

**Miss Haja:** These girls are already pregnant. What you are suggesting can be applied but not for these particular girls.

**Principal:** I am of the opinion that we will have to expel these girls from the school. Keeping them here will bring complications. What shall we do if any of them becomes sick? Who will be responsible for the medication? What if a girl has labour and dies in our hands? I do not want to handle such cases.
**Mr. Muimu:** I think I see the sense in that. Either way, we will have to send the girls home at some point. Miss Haja, will we keep calling doctors to come and check on their progress? Even if we followed the rules of the ministry, the girls will have to leave the school at some point. The earlier we do it the better.

**Miss Haja:** It is true that there will be challenges concerning their health. That is why you need to inform the parents and agree with them that they will incur all the expenses. If the parents want to withdraw their daughters from school out of their own volition, then that will be fine, but it is not right for you to expel the girls from school. Think about it this way: if you expel the girls, where will they go? They will find it a very big challenge to be admitted in any other school. That is, before they deliver.

**Principal:** We do not need to be sentimental concerning this matter Miss Haja. If we reason it that way, we will end up carrying unnecessary burdens. The girls can stay at home until they deliver. It is safe that way other than when they stay. They can go back to school later on, which I highly doubt if they will.

**Miss Haja:** I don’t see any sentimentality in my argument. On the contrary, we will be very ruthless if we decide the matter as you are suggesting.

**Mr. Muimu:** Miss Haja, you need to see the sense in this. Even if we let the girls stay, they will not do their exams this year. The Form Four girls will not be back in time for the final exam. They will be nursing their young ones.

**Miss Haja:** My stand is that they should be allowed to stay in this school and study. If they don’t manage to do the K.C.S.E. this year, then they will do it next year.

**Principal:** I cannot allow them to do the exam in this school. They will fail and lower the mean grade of the school.

**Miss Haja:** How can… (The Principal phone rings.)

**Principal:** (On the phone.) Hello… Oh Mac Bright…. I am fine…. Everyone is fine. We thank God…. Sure sir…. We are ready…. Thank you sir. (To the teachers.)
The sponsors are already on their way. They will be here any time from now. I don't want them to find the school in disorder. That will be risking the sponsorship they offer. Quick Mr. Muimu, get the expulsion letters from that shelf. (Pointing at the shelf.)

**Miss Haja:** But...

**Principal:** Hold your peace Miss Haja. Mr. Muimu, we have no time to waste. Move!

(Mr. Muimu moves to the shelf.)

The red file.

(Mr. Muimu searches the shelf but cannot see it.)

That one there.

(Mr. Muimu finally finds it.)

Pick three of them.

(He follows instructions.)

Fill in the names of the girls.

(Mr. Muimu sits to write. The principal passes him a piece of paper.)

Here are the names.

**Mr. Muimu:** What will I write as the reason of their expulsion?

**Principal:** We don't have time. What do you think? (Hesitating.) Indicate that the parents should report to school next week for further information.

**Mr. Muimu:** (Writing.) Which day?

(Miss Haja watches everything without a word.)

**Principal:** Friday. That will be a safe time.

**Mr. Muimu:** (Writing.) What is the leave out time?

**Principal:** You should have given them out by now. Now, leave! Be quick! The sponsors should find neither you nor the girls in the school compound! Remember you are leaving with the rest of the girls as we agreed yesterday.

**Mr. Muimu:** But....

**Principal:** There is no time to question my directive! Do as I say! Leave!

(Mr. Muimu hesitantly walks out.)

**Miss Haja:** Rethink this matter sir....
Principal: That’s where you go wrong Miss Haja. This current generation, if given freedom, will use it to kill you. Give a man a handshake and he extends it to the elbow.

Are you not the one who is fond of saying that?

Miss Haja: But matters are different in this case.

Principal: My word is final! Let me give you a free piece of advice. These girls have very loose behaviour. They sleep with every Onyango, Mutua and Wanyama. Their morals are loose. (Raising his voice.) Loose I say! You are aware of that Madam.

Miss Haja: I agree, but you are confusing issues here. Don’t you think...

(Principal raises his hand to interrupt.)

Principal: We have to look for a way of curbing this rotten behaviour.

Miss Haja: (Utterly shocked. Raising her voice.)

Your thinking is fallacious!

Principal: I have always reprimanded and condemned irresponsible sexual behaviour. I am a pastor. A man of God, do not mistake me.

Miss Haja: You are indeed a man of God! Is lying a greater sin than teenage sex?

Principal: I am not applying any double standards. You are aware that Taby, one of the girls in my custody, is one of the pregnant girls. If it were double standards, I would not have sent her home. If I excuse these girls, people might think it is because she is one of them. I want the girls to learn their lesson and know that I do not condone irresponsible behaviour.

Miss Haja: You never cease to amuse and surprise me Mr. Iscariot. Why don’t you be true to yourself for once? You are the guardian of the girl as you have rightly put it. You ought to know what happened to her. Are you saying you are ignorant of that?

Principal: You are not to advise me on how to bring up my children. That’s not in your job description. I forbid you to talk about such matters. Now leave my office. I have to prepare on how I will receive the sponsors.
Miss Haja:  (Ignoring what he has said.) Think about it? Where were you when this was happening to her? Do you mean you have not spoken to her and found out what transpired?

Principal:  Why are you interested? I said she will learn her lesson!

Miss Haja:  Are you sure you are clean on this matter?

Principal:  (Trying to hide his suspicion.) What do you mean? Are you suspecting that I.... Remember I am your employer. Accord me the respect I deserve.

Miss Haja:  I have not disrespected you in any way. Is it out of sheer mischief that Taby claims that you make sexual advances at her?

Principal:  (Standing up and agitated.) What! I'll strangle that girl. How dare she drag me to her woes? That is a serious offence.

(Picks up his phone and dials a number. He does not access the number.)

Miss Haja:  Calm down sir, this is a young girl. Stop fighting her. Help her overcome the challenge that has befallen her. You are a man. Take responsibility.

Principal:  (Places the phone on the table. Sternly but trying to regain his cool.)

Miss Haja, leave this place at once or else I'll call the police!

Miss. Haja:  Call the police! Thou should not be afraid sir! You don't need to be afraid of me. I am not your enemy. Your enemy is you. You will destroy yourself if you don't change from your evil ways. I leave you in peace. I can't take this anymore. I have resigned.

(A knock on the door, which has been slightly open since Mr. Muimu left. Two students peep in. Then hesitate in coming in.)

Principal:  (Attempting to sit down and regain his composure.) Come in.

(No one comes in. The principal raises his voice come in.)

Miss Haja : (Stands up.) This is my last day in this school.

(Walks out.)

Principal:  (Stands up and follows her. The girls move to one side so as to give Miss Haja way. They then move to enter the office in such a way that
they have blocked the principal from walking out. The principal desperately projects his voice so that Miss Haja will hear.)

We are not done Miss Haja!

(Realizes she is already gone. Muttering to himself.)

What is all this! What the hell!

(Notes that the girls are staring at him with shock and fear written on their faces.)

**Principal:** What is it Taby and Ororei? Leave this place immediately. I don’t want to see anyone now!

(The gateman walks past the girls and enters the office. He salutes the principal.)

**Gateman:** Sir, the sponsors have come in.

**Principal:** (Agitated.) Where are they? Come on... (Realizing that the girls are still at the door looking at him.)

(Harshly.) What are you still doing there? Leave! (To the gateman.) Take these girls to Mr. Muimu. Tell him to leave with the girls immediately. The sponsors should not see them.

(Clears his table hurriedly and leaves the office.)

The end.
WORKS CITED


